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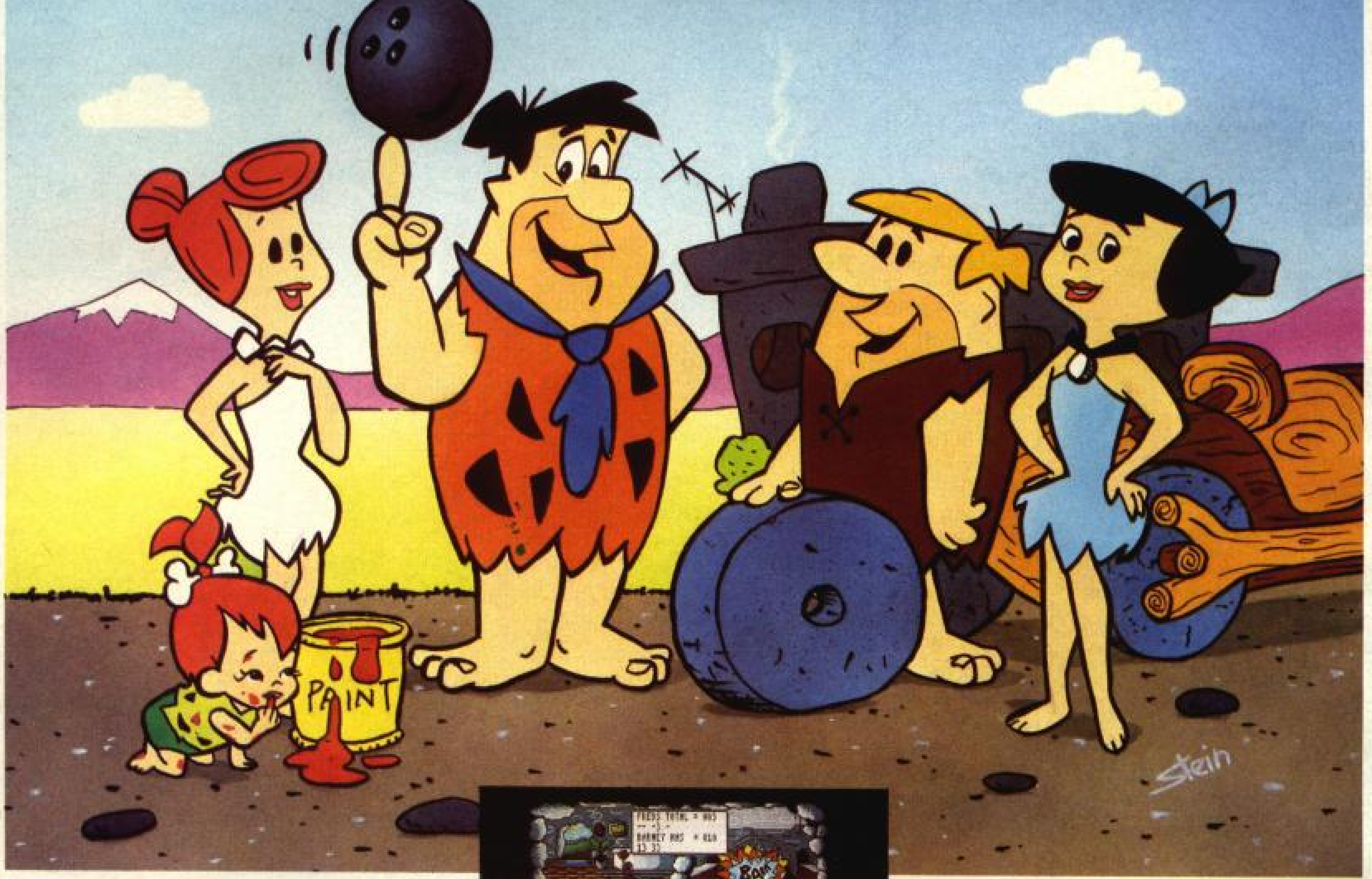
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The Editor's decision is final in all matters relating to adjudication and while we offer prizes in good faith, believing them to be available, if something untoward happens (like a game that has been offered as a prize being scrapped) we reserve the right to substitute prizes of comparable value. We'll do our very best to despatch prizes as soon as possible after the published closing date. Winners names will appear in a later issue of ZZAP!. No correspondence can be entered into regarding the competitions (unless we've written to you stating that you have won a prize and it doesn't turn up, in which case drop Glenys Powell a line at the PO Box 10 address). No person who has any relationship, no matter how remote, to anyone who works for either Newsfield or any of the companies offering prizes, may enter one of our competitions.

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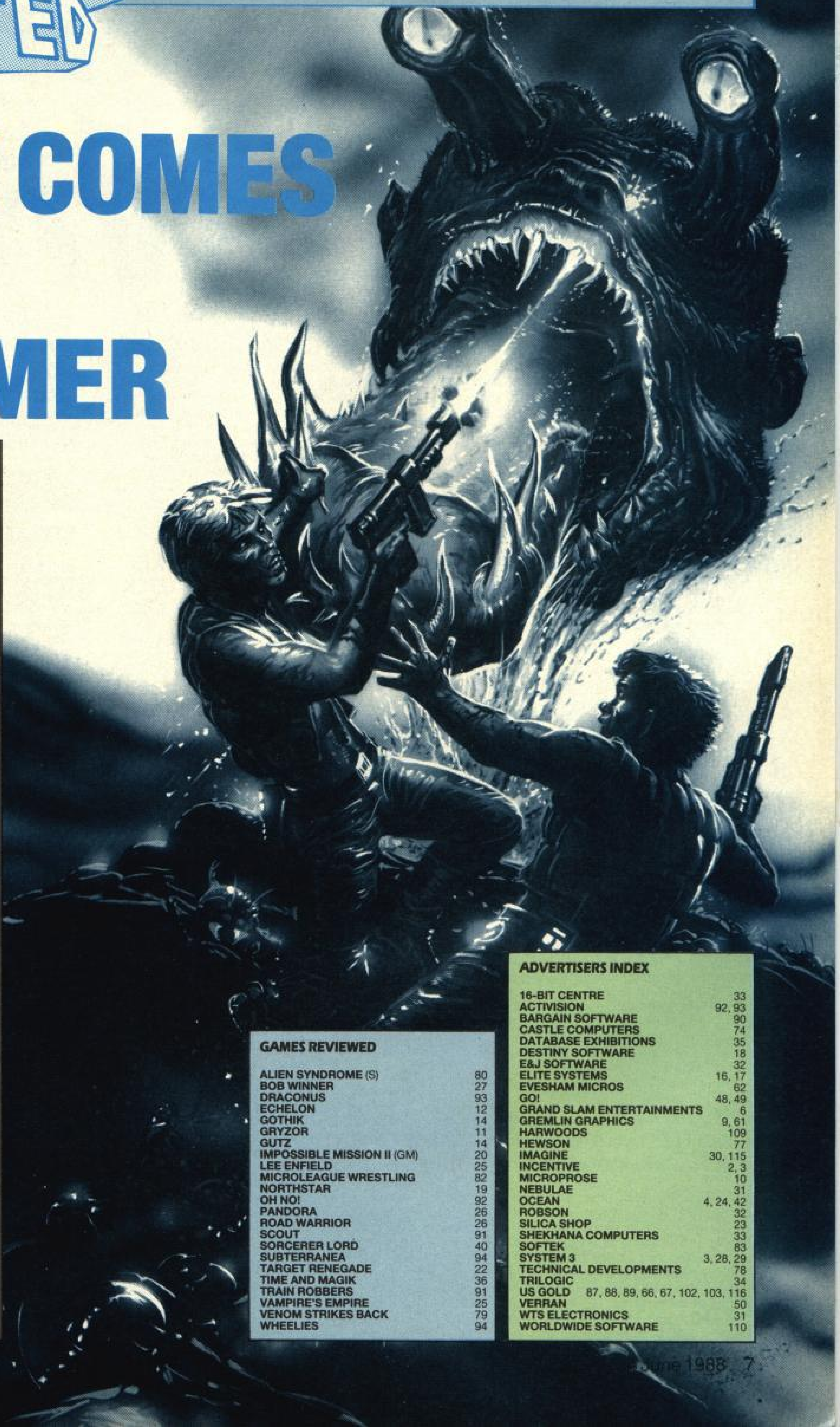
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ZZAP! ED

HERE COMES THE SUMMER



It's that time of the year again, the so-called 'silly season' when software production drops, and programmers start work on projects that are scheduled to finish just before Christmas! This year is no exception, and this month sees a distinct drop in the number of reviews. Mind you, this doesn't mean there's a slump in the quality of software (although it's true to say there are a couple of screaming turkeys), with *Impossible Mission II* acquiring a Gold Medal award and *Alien Syndrome* scrapping Sizzler status.

Those seeking fame and fortune have two opportunities to achieve their ambition. If you're a nifty joystick-wielder, why not enter the National Computer Games Championship? If you've got any gamesplaying talent and are able to stay cool under pressure, you've got a great chance of winning – take it from me!

The second opportunity comes in the form of the The PC Show Art Exhibition. It's a competition aimed specifically at those who enjoy painting with pixels, so if you have some computer pictures, why not send them off. You never know, your work could well be displayed at the PC Show in front of more than 60,000 people! More details are available on page 51.

Finally, after a year with ZZAP! Steve Jarratt (for reasons best known to himself) has decided to switch alliances to the Spectrum and wander off to edit ZZAP!'s sister magazine, CRASH. Even though he's a traitorous toad, I'm sure you'll join me in wishing him all the best for the future.

Anyway, enough for this month – the Sun is shining, and I want another go of *Impossible Mission II* . . .

J Rignall

Julian Rignall

GAMES REVIEWED

ADVERTISERS INDEX



Mel Croucher's

UNDER THE BAUD-WALK

FLYDAY (COMPUTER ARENA '88, Jersey)

My Editor wants me to tell Baudwalkers all about the wonderful events of Newsfield's recent **COMPUTER ARENA '88**, mainly because he's suffering from amnesia caused by the fact that his pony tail is much too tight. I will not go in to the unfortunate incident at Hotel Reception, when cartoonist **ROBIN EVANS** discovered that he had been booked in as 'Mrs Croucher' and was forced to borrow a frock from **LESLEY MANSFORD** of Electronic Arts. Neither will I reveal what happened to the telephone sockets which were fitted to the toilet walls. I'm prepared to tell you that Loriciel's **NIKKI PENNY** used to promote a well-known line in rubber goods, that **ANDREW HEWSON**'s first job involved Jesus Christ and Tutenkhamen, that Grand Slam's **STEPHEN HALL** dallied with The Saint, Lennon and MacCartney and The Prisoner, and that **IAN ANDREW** of Incentive is expecting a baby. If you want to find out full details of the unashamed truth, you'll have to read a feature called 'Wee Jobbies' and a cartoon strip called 'Mercy Dash' in the current GAMES MACHINE.

The CRASH and ZZAP! Reader's Awards were almost ruined by some idiot in a white dinner jacket, who looked like the Bulgarian Ambassador with a hammer and sickle on his lapel, and insisted on raving on about dangly-wobbly bits instead of reading out the winners. But those wonderful **DOMARK** twins saved the day by arranging for **BRUCE EVERISS** of Codemasters to be taken away by Men In White Coats, and by forcing Telecomsoft's **CLAIRE EDGELEY** to say a very rude word over the microphone. The Horizontal Champ Award went to Headlice's **SIMON HARVEY**, who managed to remain intoxicated for three days, the Brass Neck Award was claimed by the publishers of **ACE** Magazine who had the good grace to turn up, and my sympathies go out to **MR X**, the boss of a well known computer firm, whose wife informed the switchboard at 5.30 am that she would be suing for divorce, just as the gentleman in question was buying me another quart of bubbly. Oh yeah, lots of people made lots of Important Decisions to make your computing pleasure even greater, but that's much too boring to write about.

SHATTERDAY (COMPUTER ARENA '88, Moss Bros)

In this Industry, as in all my previous incarnations, conferences and award ceremonies seem to be an equal mix of show biz, big biz and monkey biz. What makes today's events welcome and very different is the fact that nobody is running around with knives in their back. Indeed, by 7.00 am tomorrow morning, I'm flat on my back in the company of System 3's **TIM BEST**, and I apologise for calling him not only 'Hagar The Horrible' but also 'Jabba The Hutt' in public. In return, the bearded beamer publicly promises me a bribe, er, I mean a fact-finding trip to Kenya for the launch of the up-and-coming computer extravaganza *Tusker*. I haven't got the heart to tell him that I know all about *Tusker* already, and can write my review in advance. Here it is . . . *Tusker* is one of the finest and most moving operas that Puccini ever wrote. Set during the collapse of the Roman Republic in 1800, the twisted relationship between the Chief of the Secret Police and the Fat Lady contrasts physical love with spiritual murder, with inevitable tragic results. Why System 3 reckon they can top Sir George Solti's manipulation of Dame Kiri Te Kanawa beats me.

FESTIVAL OF THE ORDERLY BREAD QUEUE (COMPUTER ARENA '68, Czechoslovakia)

If you think that my life is one glamorous and exciting round of jet-setting and creative bliss, you're damn right. After dropping off my Irish Setter at something that looks like a canine Kolditz, I arrive in the most beautiful city in Europe: no, not Ludlow – Prague. I've been commissioned to write a no-holds-barred alternative guide to the 14 most exciting cities I know, for those awfully nice Prestel-type folk at **MICRONET 800**, and I assure you that the fact that today is the 20th anniversary of the brave Prague Spring is purely intentional. The computerised Metro system is quite unbelievable, with CD-generated talking carriages giving running commentaries, and a ticket costing 2p to anywhere in the city. Czech computers are very much like our machines, except that they weigh half a ton each, and are used to train lady athletes for the Olympic shot-putt. Software disks are amazingly cheap, plentiful and blank. Being an evangelical hypocrite, I play the black market whenever possible, and it's my pleasure to inform you that a steak dinner for two, four pints of the best beer in the world, a packet of fags and a cabaret costs me three quid.

DRY MATINEE (1948)

Back to Airship One, to find a copy of *Project Stealth Fighter* from **MICROPROSE** doing their bit to improve East-West relations. I especially dislike the rabid anti-Commie text, which could have been written by Adolf Hitler himself. Speaking of fascists, I really enjoyed **MIRRORSOFT**'s launch of *Rocket Ranger*, at the National Film Theatre. Billed as a 'Saturday morning matinee', and held on a Friday, I'm invited to 'enjoy myself in a boisterous and visible manner' as Tom Cody saves the world from jet-propelled Nazis. Love it, love it, love it, particularly the Rocket Ranger's base camp which is smuttily named Fort Dix. After throwing my choc ice at the usherette, booing the goodies and cheering the baddies, I'm treated to *The Three Stooges*, although they don't look a bit like the SDP to me.

FLOPPY DISCO CHAMPIONSHIPS (Club ZX18-30)

SPECTRUM HOLOBYTE are another company doing their best to help prepare us all for Glasnost. In *Falcon* I'm allowed not only to blow Russians out of the sky, but I'm also encouraged with the sound of missile launches 'actually sampled from the real thing'. Funny, I don't remember World War III at all. Must have been after closing time, I suppose.

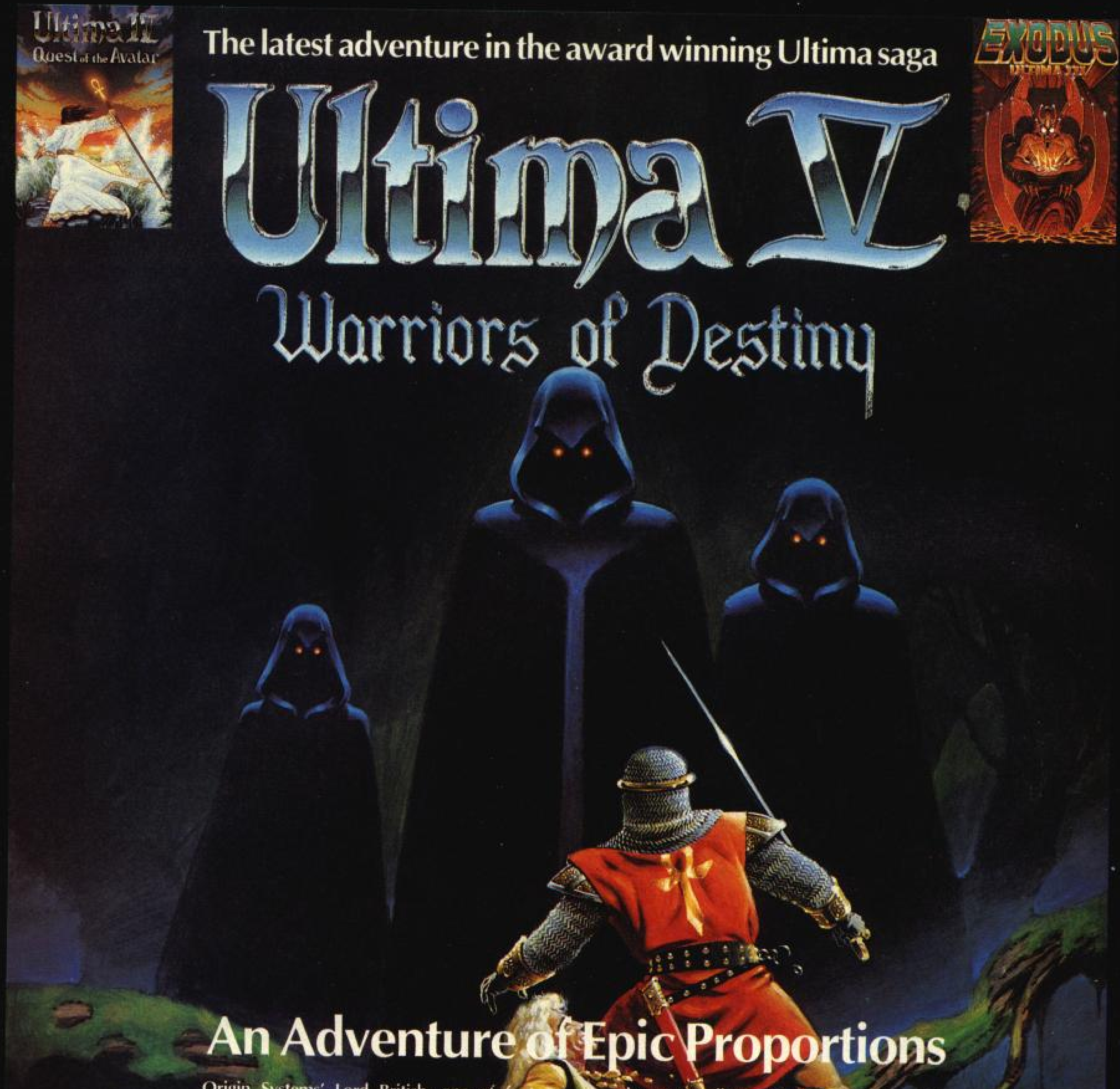
RED LETTER DAY (Uranus)

Spring has sprung, the sap is rising, a young man's fancy turns to thoughts of software and it all gets ruined by the fixation that is currently rife. I refuse to comment on the constipation-cure title *Rimrunner* from **PALACE**, and the fact that the boss of **NEXT** is calling himself **STEVE JOBS** is in very poor taste, whereas **RACK-IT**'s *HeroBOTix* sounds like military nappies. But I'm forced to point out that those rude people from **TOMY** are trying to turn youthful minds on to more amusing forms of *Bots*. Haven't they heard about Clause 28, and Government's disapproval of promoting 'unnatural acts'? Obviously not. Their outrageous Bots carry the fashionable film-title warning *Batteries Not Included* and cater for several dubious tastes. Included in the series of kiddywinky electronic toys is *Dingbot* (a method of bell-ringing favoured by certain monks), *Spotbot* (a traditional affliction of schoolboy programmers), *Crackbot* (the terrible new method of drug-taking imported from Miami) and *Chatbot* (the hole through which software advertisers talk). Perhaps I've misunderstood these little robots, but it sounds like a bum deal to me.

FOX HUNTING SEASON BEGINS (Samantha Archipelago)

A deal of a different anatomy is **MARTECH**'s *Vixen*, whose adverts show what the well-dressed jungle girl is almost wearing. Nice to know that today's wild women of the rain forest shave their armpits, wax their legs, apply hairspray to their dyed blond tresses, and pop on a pair of high-heeled sandals before squatting to relieve themselves in the nearest potted plant display at Marks & Spencers. Eager to learn more, I dial the *Vixen Hotline*, before realising that the Devil's number is hidden away there. I feel it my duty to report that heavy breathing is alive and well, and available on 0323 766616, along with back seat poetry such as 'be quick . . . hurry, come . . . no rest for days and nights . . . stop . . . tired now' and the usual complaint 'not long'! I hereby submit my latest portrait taken in my natural habitat, and expect an invitation from Martech by return of post. I'm sure that I can help out their unfortunate wee Vixen in a jiffy.


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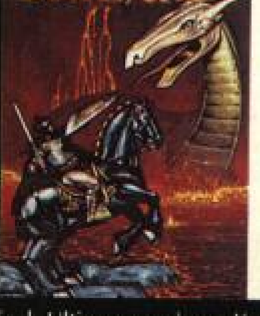
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GRYZOR

Ocean, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick with keys

The Durr invasion force from the Planet Suna has established an Atmosphere Processing Plant (APP) in one of Earth's unchartered regions. By bringing about another Ice Age, they plan to overrun the planet and capture its resources. As Lance Gryzor – a member of the Federation for Earth's Defences – the player faces the task of stopping them.

The game is divided into three sections, each subdivided into scenes. Each scene comprises a full-screen playing area, with an information bar at the top, which details both players' scores and the top score, the number of lives remaining (initially three), current weapon held and the level barrier status.

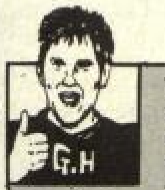
The first two sections comprise three scenes. The first push scrolls horizontally right to left through jungle terrain outside the APP, where aliens armed with rifles constantly patrol. In addition, emplacements launch bullets and mines are laid at strategic points – contact with aliens or their weaponry loses a life.

The second scene switches to first person perspective action as the player follows a map through heavily defended tunnels, attempting to destroy four emplacements within a 40 second time limit. Aliens run out from behind canisters and launch grenades and sprays of bullets. Shooting these occasionally relinquishes bonus weapon canisters. A life is lost if the time limit expires before the task is complete, or on contact with bullets and explosions.

The third scene pits Gryzor against the control room itself, which is constantly defended by alien guards and continually releases lethal bullet rounds. Completing any scene rewards the player with an extra life.

The final section contains two parts: in the first, Gryzor battles his way through the APP to reach the enemy mothership; in the second he fights his way to the mothership's heart to destroy it.

Gryzor is initially armed with a rifle; however, extra firepower is collected by shooting weapons/stores carriers. When shot they release a weapons capsule, which gives extra abilities according to its marked letter: rapid fire, scatter gun (fires in three directions at once), laser gun (a rapid-fire, powerful blaster) and a barrier (rendering the player temporarily invulnerable).



The difficulty level is a slight deterrent: however, once a pattern is established, the game takes an irresistible and compelling hold. The programmers have managed to capture the spirit of the arcade original, resulting in some brilliantly frenetic action set across equally polished backdrops. The graphics are subtly coloured and detailed – although the animation isn't super smooth – and the sound is decent enough, with suitable laser and gunfire effects. However, you barely have time to notice them since much of the time is spent blasting and dodging. The game is full of neat touches – the range of available weapons, time limits, extra lives after completing a scene – and is only marred by two aspects: using the space bar to jump (which is awkward in tight spots) and the sometimes ungenerous collision detection. Despite these minor annoyances, Gryzor **is worthy to be in anyone's collection.**

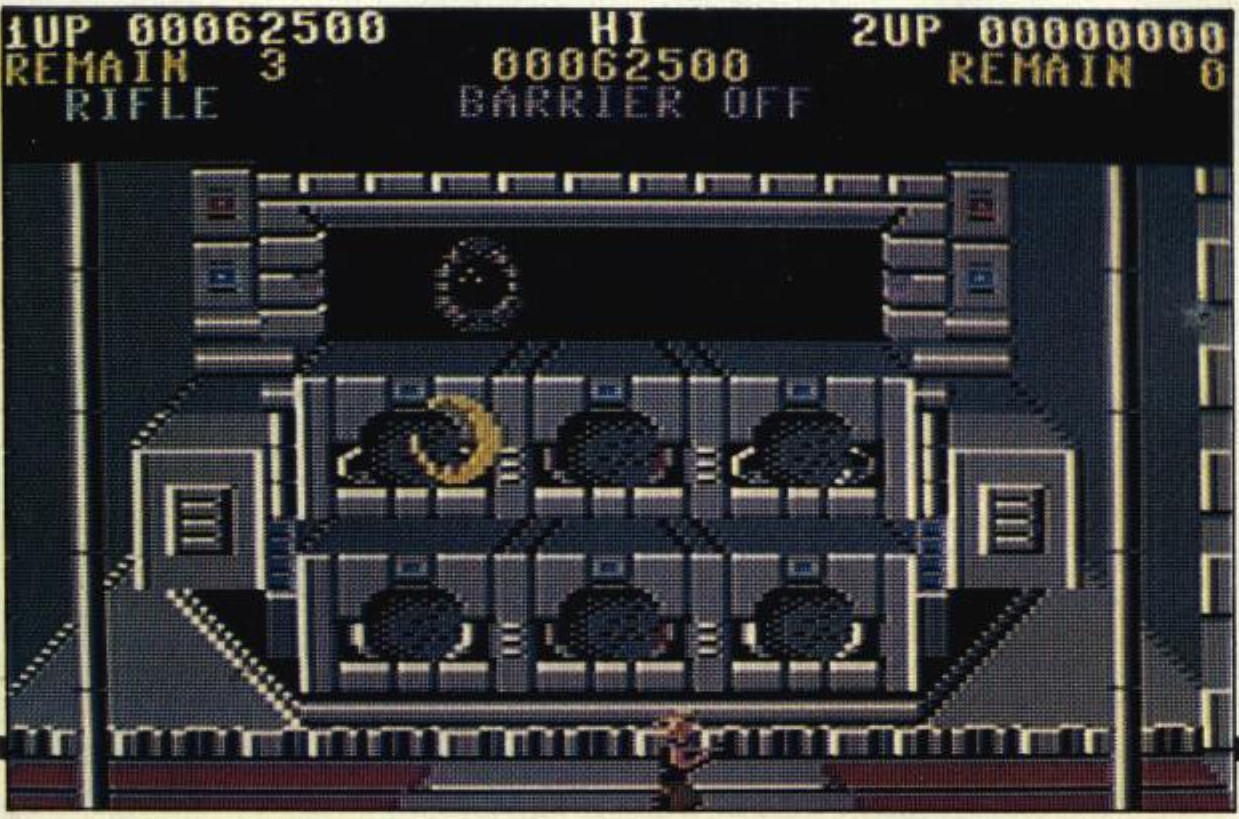


I haven't played Gryzor **in the arcades – it never really appealed to me – but on the 64 it makes an excellent game. The difficulty level is set high, which makes for some frustrating play at first, but once you settle down and begin to make progress, the game really grabs you. The first section is straightforward enough and allows you to collect an extra weapon (the laser is the best), but the action really hots up once you enter the complex and come up against the screen-sized defensive barriers and have to blast their (usually tiny) weak spots. The frenetic pace hardly ever lets up, which gives a great feeling of exhilaration, and there's eight tough levels to conquer. My only niggle is that the space bar is used to jump, which is awkward when you're trying to destroy a target and dodge bullets! Other than that,** Gryzor **is very enjoyable and challenging, and should keep even the most seasoned shoot 'em up fan glued to his Commodore.**



Phew! Playing this conversion is almost as hard as Mr Gryzor himself! Grown reviewers (well, me anyway) have been on the brink of tears as time after time they are beaten by an unexpected bullet or grenade, but still the urge to continue remains. The graphics aren't bad and sound is pretty mediocre, but the gameplay is addictive to the point of obsession. The variety within the three sections is very encouraging, and the different weapons are satisfyingly dangerous to Durrs, but it takes an awful lot of practice to make sure your commando doesn't lose his armament seconds after he's crossed a screenful of aliens to pick it up. Two bugbears I would gripe about, though, are some slightly suspect collision detection, and the necessity of using the space bar to jump. I know I should have mastered this technique ages ago with Green Beret**, but I didn't, and I'm afraid the most ergonomic way around this still eludes me. If you don't have this problem, have no reservations over buying** Gryzor**. If you do have this problem, get the game anyway and cure it.**

▶ **Scene Three: armed only with a rifle, Lance Gryzor has destroyed two laser turrets**



PRESENTATION 75%
One/two-player option, helpful instructions and clear screen display, slightly marred by a sometimes awkward control method.

GRAPHICS 81%
Captures the spirit of the arcade version: detailed and colourful throughout, with reasonable sprite animation.

SOUND 71%
Music and sound effects together during play, both of which are polished, if not exceptional. The title track soon grates, however.

HOOKABILITY 81%
Difficult at first, but the frenetic blasting action soon takes hold.

LASTABILITY 82%
Eight increasingly difficult scenes spread over three levels prove compulsive to play and tricky to crack.

OVERALL 86%
A challenging, neatly converted and enjoyable shoot 'em up.

ECHELON

Access/US Gold, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick with keys

NB: LIPSTIK AVAILABLE SEPARATELY

It's the 21st Century. In Patrol Zone 106 on the planet Isis a series of unexplained and puzzling events require investigation. As a newly assigned pilot to Echelon – a top secret flight facility – you are awarded the mission of collecting artifacts and information to help unravel the mystery.

The game is played in three modes: Scientific (exploration without engaging enemies), Patrol (mild resistance faced) and Military (non-stop enemy attacks). The peaceful mode permits exploration and practice flight through the landscape's obstacle training courses. Combat additionally involves action against ground installations or airborne enemy craft: to speed up these sequences, there is an option to turn off ground features. Three types of missile are available: HDAPPs (High Density Anti-Proton Projectiles - useful at short range), Photon cannon (a high intensity pulse laser) and missiles (medium range solid fuel rockets).

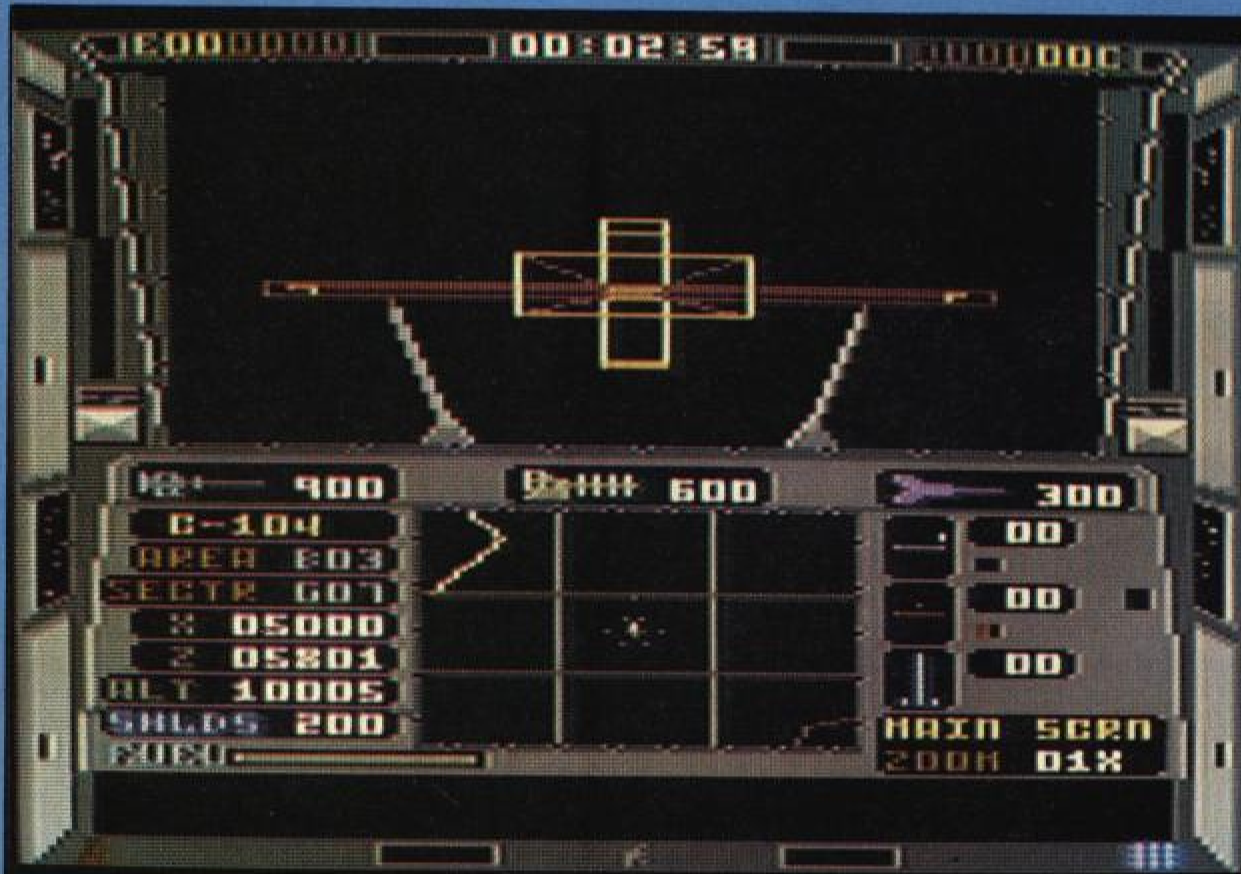
Game parameters are altered by accessing the Data Link with the main computer, selecting game options and setting the combat strength between 0 and 6. This computer also provides information on docking procedures and options, alters the sound filter setting, displays pirate maps and allows games to be saved/loaded.

A voice verification procedure is activated with the Lipstik before beginning a game; thereafter the program only responds to the current player's voice. Once the game is fully loaded, the player is presented with a view from within the Tomahawk inside the orbiting main base. Should the craft be severely damaged or run out of weapons or fuel, the base station provides appropriate facilities. Pressing fire and pushing up on the joystick leads into the action.

The display is divided into a half-screen viewing section and a control panel. Zone 106 is shown in 3D first person perspective vector graphics, updating at between two and ten frames per second relative to the on-screen action and whether or not the ship's radar is enabled. Six views are available:



▲ **Deploying the RPV allows you to perform some pretty fancy remote control flying**



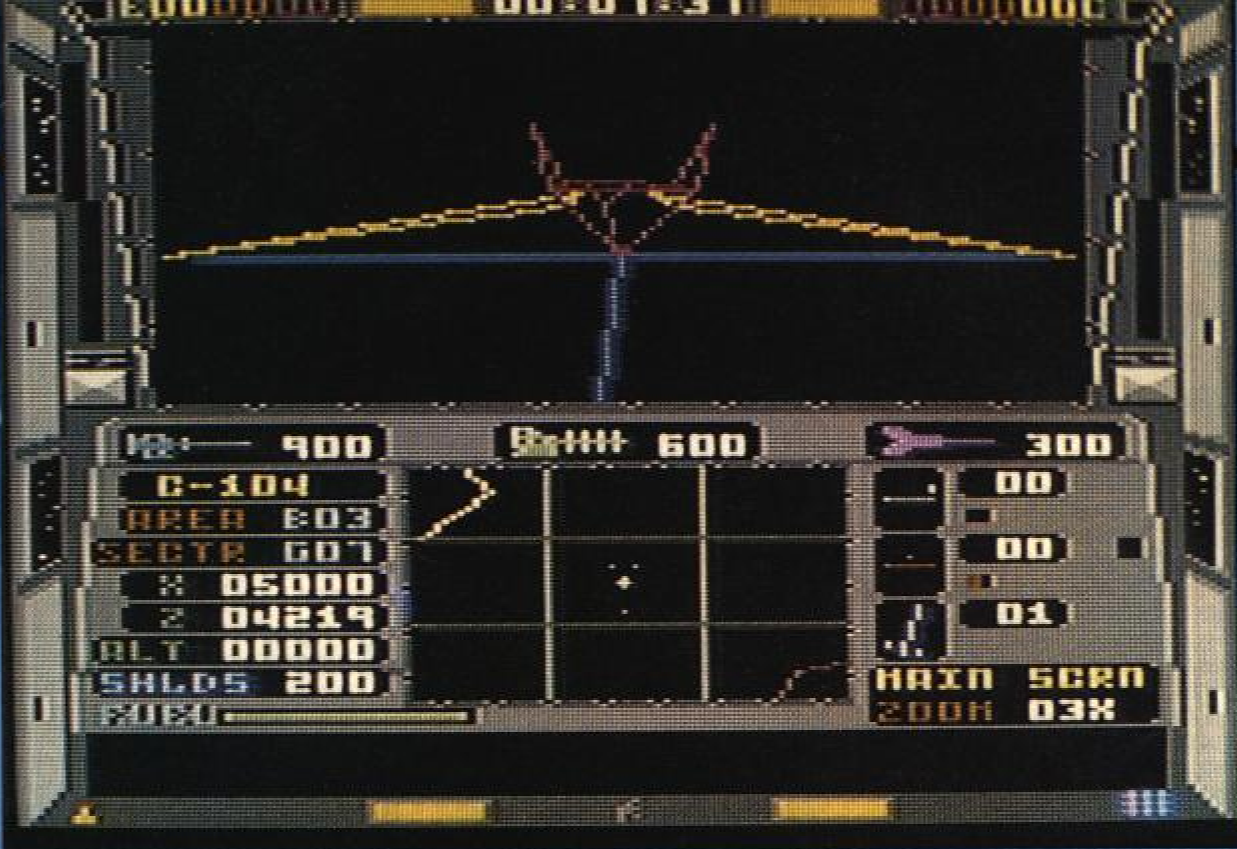
▼ **Rear view: leaving the orbiting main base**



Full marks to Access for attempting such an ambitious project, but after several Echelon **sessions, it would appear they've bitten off more than a 64 can comfortably chew. The level of apparent depth is quite extraordinary, with major landscape features which each have a history, and obstacles placed specially for practice purposes. Unfortunately these are rendered useless by the awful slowness of screen update, as well as the unrealistic ability to fly through them without any shield damage. Trying to negotiate something like the floating tunnel requires a ridiculous amount of lining up and slow flying, only to have the aircraft drift through the wall at the first bend. So why bother? Combat under such conditions is hopeless, even with most of the display switched off, and doesn't come close to the standard set by** Mercenary **all those years ago. Bearing all this in mind, the enormity of the task is intimidating to the point of being discouraging. The Lipstik adds quite a bit of atmosphere to the game, but whether or not you think it's worth purchasing is dependent on how much you like these sort of games in the first place.**



On first hearing of the Carver's new game, my initial feelings were of extreme interest: it sounded like Mercenary **with faster vectors, improved perspective, more depth and a realistic combat sequence . . . Unfortunately the reality is considerably less than the dream:** Echelon **is slow – very slow. The frame update is surprisingly sluggish, considering the simplicity of many of the features and the small screen size used. You're constantly battling a horrendous buffer between command and action in both flight and combat, which is made particularly infuriating because of the time delay during the flight of the missile. Moving around the game takes quite some time, and exploring the whole available surface strikes me as a real chore. The perspective of the graphics, rather than being an improvement over** Mercenary**, is very often wrong; this is mainly in evidence when next to tall, thin buildings, which shimmy around like fairground inflatables. The Lipstik is effective, and is an added attraction that can be used with other programs that use the space bar for a function! Full marks for the attempt, but** Mercenary **still holds sway over the 3D adventure world.**



▲ This screenshot displays the simplicity of the graphics, but not their slow update

▼ *Echelon*: flying high



front, rear, left, right, up and down; in addition a Remote Patrol Vehicle is launched for closer inspection of dubious ground installations.

The control panel details the ship velocity, current location, altitude, shield level, fuel, missile type active and ship status. The status indicates the heading, pitch, bank and vertical speed of the craft. In addition, the Top View window displays a permanent plan view of the planet surface, which is magnified up to 22 times.

The keyboard allows full control over the Tomahawk's additional features: the six views, object teleporter, RPV deployment, a timer for training courses and hover facilities. Zone and area maps are accessed to detail current location and area explored, as well as providing a hyperdrive facility.

The game requires the player to collect 240 artifacts found within the zone's 36 areas: each area is loaded in from disk, the cassette version involving searching for the appropriate section. Once objects are teleported aboard the Tomahawk, they are cashed in for credits, and a section of one of six coloured pirate maps is filled in. Information and objects collected also provide cyphers detailing pirate operations and locations.

Once all six maps are filled in, accompanying pirate text – which needs to be deciphered – details the missions to be fulfilled. These involve flying to a specific point and performing predetermined manoeuvres; once all are completed *in a specific order* (there are 720 different combinations), the cloaking system is deactivated and the game won.

▼ Under hostile enemy fire, a combination of smart manoeuvres and keen flying is required





Echelon **is an absolutely incredible game let down by only one feature: the slow speed of the vector update. Even at its most rapid, you tend to overcompensate on the controls – a situation which proves frustrating (and fatal) during the otherwise frenetic combat sequences. Having said that,** Echelon **has an amazing amount of depth. The sheer size of the playing area is awesome, matched by an equally daunting task which proves genuinely compelling to tackle. The control over the game's parameters and six difficulty levels make exploration very addictive. The package includes a superb instruction manual, map and keyboard overlay, and the on-screen presentation is excellent.** Echelon **is the ultimate in exploration games, and offers weeks and weeks of intensive and rewarding play. If you don't mind the fact that it plays slowly I recommend you buy it immediately.**

PRESENTATION 90%
Zone map, keyboard overlay, detailed screen display and Lipstik option. The controls, however, prove awkward to use because of the slow movement.

GRAPHICS 69%
Even at their fastest, the vector graphics are jerky – a situation slightly appeased by the wide number of viewing options.

SOUND 61%
Realistic aircraft noises balanced by some feeble spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 75%
Until you're accustomed to the controls, the gameplay proves both difficult and a little tedious. However, the weight of the task and freedom of movement keep you coming back for more.

LASTABILITY 89%
One of the largest tasks in any computer game, but the slowness of the action could discourage interest.

OVERALL 81%
An innovative and profound simulation marred by its on-screen action. Try it before you buy.



GUTZ

Ocean, £8.95, £12.95, joystick with keys

A giant space-being is currently in orbit around Earth. One man is sent to investigate, and is promptly swallowed alive by the hungry extraterrestrial. He's not so easily digested, though, and from its stomach he hatches a plan to save the Earth from being next on the menu.

Taking the role of digestee, the player runs through 16 scrolling mazes of flesh which make up each of the beast's four internal organs. The objective is to negotiate each organ, working through the kidneys, lungs, heart and brain, destroying each in the process, and ultimately killing the monster. Getting through each organ's protective membrane requires a weapon, and the three component parts of this contraption are found scattered along the organ's maze of arteries.

Lymphocytes occupy the arteries and do their best to eradicate foreign bodies from the system: contact with these takes its toll on the player's energy bar, complete drain of which leaves him prone to instant digestion. Protection is provided in the shape of an enzyme blaster – ammunition for which is readily available from glands situated around each system.



Although sporting a smart line in colourful and effective pseudo 3D graphics, Gutz's attractions lie merely with the purely aesthetic: a more repetitive game you could not wish to meet. Maze games have never really filled me with enthusiasm, and if you remove the very average blasting from this Special FX offering, that's all you're left with. The availability of a map only serves to remove the dubious enjoyment of its negotiation. The bouncy soundtrack is dreadfully out of place, although the rest of the game is reasonably well presented and the action smooth and glitch-free. Unfortunately, in the gameplay stakes, the link between Gutz and the contents of a digestive system is rather apt.



After Firefly, my expectations of the second Special FX game were high. However, a couple of games later I was scratching my head in bewilderment wondering what went wrong. First impressions lead you to believe that this is a sort of Alien Syndrome clone, but after running around the very repetitive mazes and shooting bland creatures for an hour or so, you start getting a distinct sinking feeling. Four identical mazes are endured before a giant guardian is encountered – destroy that, and it's onto the next, very similar maze. Apart from the occasional between-maze break, the game consists of merely blasting the persistent creatures and finding the exit. The action isn't that difficult, and after a couple of sessions there's no incentive to play further, so the game becomes completely redundant.



It's difficult to come to a quick conclusion on a game like this, because it looks as though it should be good. Fortunately, I've managed it: after thinking, 'is it just me, or is this game universally tedious?', the rest of the team have confirmed my suspicions. The graphics are very good all round and sound is used quite well, but the fundamental gameplay consists of simply running through a maze of arteries blasting never-ending hordes of creepy-crawlies. The availability of a map makes it more accessible than most games of this type, but even that and the different weapons can't save Gutz from its monotonous action. To make things worse, the game hardly changes between levels; concentrated playing simply gives rise to those 'seen-it-all-before' blues.

GOTHIK

Firebird, £9.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick with keys

The Druid Hasrinaxx lies scattered in six pieces around the Catacombs of Kaza: four dark towers, each with seven levels. His two viking servants, Olga and Olaf, are assigned the task of reassembling and resurrecting him.

From the title screen the player selects one of the two characters. Each has individual abilities: Olga has keen magical powers and Olaf has great strength. Every level is set over nine four-way push-scrolling screens, consisting of a maze patrolled by 16 kinds of monster. These punch or launch missiles at the vikings, reducing the energy bar at the foot of the screen. Other levels are accessed via one or more teleports found in each maze.

Both characters are armed with a choice of three weapons: arrows, lightning bolts and powerful fireballs. These are selected by accessing the status screen with the space bar. This displays Hasrinaxx' current state as a glowing skeleton and provides player status information, including weapons active, spells and shields collected.



First impressions aren't good. Unrealistic graphics and a rather bland maze give it the look of a very basic Gauntlet clone. Look beyond these shortcomings, though, and the game isn't too bad. The 32 potions don't yield anything extraordinary, but because the flasks change their contents between games, they do bring a modicum of variety to alleviate the tedium of blasting monsters. The pleasing thing about letting rip with arrows and lightning bolts is that they don't stop at the screen boundaries, and lightning bounces around some distance from the player, killing off monsters yet to be seen. The use of two different characters is a good idea, but I must admit that I didn't notice a great deal of difference between their characteristics or their on-screen representation. I found Gothik mildly playable, but if you already have a rackful of these games, you should try before you buy.





Imagine a Gauntlet game without the action, and you're on the way to conjuring up an accurate mental picture of Gothik. It's not just the game that's dull – the graphics are very bland, consisting of repetitive backdrops and blocky, undetailed sprites. It must be said that the game does have depth, with plenty of different spells to cast and problems to solve, but the pedestrian speed of the action and lack of reward means that boredom and frustration tend to creep in. Those who like sprawling exploration games might well thoroughly enjoy this, but I don't think that Gothik warrants the perseverance it requires.



Any resemblance Gothik has to the Druid series is negligible: its graphics, sound and gameplay are far inferior. The depth isn't lacking: the extensive range of spells and potions and the large number of creatures enhance the otherwise tedious gameplay, but the visual and aural presentation is horrible. The dearth of colour and variety in the maze floors is matched by their poor detail; the same problems afflict the blocky, poorly animated and very dull sprites. Olga and Olaf don't behave in a discernibly different way, and certainly don't look very different. Gothik may have the depth of its predecessors but it lacks their professionalism and polish, and so is a far from worthy purchase.

Relics of previous person-swallowing situations provide aids to the player's quest: crystals give three minutes of rapid enzyme firing and helmets provide temporary protection against bullets, specific creatures and puffs of noxious gas. A mapping unit allows the player to call up a plan of the current artery quadrant, showing his position and that of all the collectable items.

PRESENTATION 83%
Useful options. Excellent title screen.

GRAPHICS 79%
Inventive sprites with appropriately fleshy, but repetitive, organic backdrops.

SOUND 64%
Screeching in-game soundtrack ensure the player is driven to switch to the much better spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 66%
Interesting concept and graphics create the initial grab.

LASTABILITY 41%
Monotonous gameplay inspires feelings of boredom.

OVERALL 51%
Some good ideas and execution are let down by unvarying gameplay.

In addition, 32 potions are collected which endow the character with bonus abilities, such as extra speed, magic replenishment and more effective weaponry. Other items are picked up such as food, gold, shields, extra lives and magic relics to provide enhanced defence in the form of masks, invisibility rings and death auras.

PRESENTATION 69%
Large screen display and helpful instructions marred by sometimes awkward and generally limited character control.

GRAPHICS 40%
The backdrops lack colour and detail, and the sprites are blocky.

SOUND 80%
Some evocative effects and an appropriate title track.

HOOKABILITY 67%
The number of levels, objects to collect and spells to command are rendered unappealing by the unspectacular format and average graphics.

LASTABILITY 38%
Little inter-level diversity and basic gameplay conspire to prove unaddictive.

OVERALL 44%
A dull *Gauntlet* variant, which doesn't live up to its potential.

THE THREE STOOGES

Cinemaware/Mirrorsoft, £14.99 disk, joystick only

Ma's Orphanage is in a state of disrepair and under imminent threat of closure: at least $5000 is required to save it. The Three Stooges have decided to raise the money, and have 28 turns to do so.

The action is set across a boardgame format: locations are visited in a predetermined order and offer six choices accordingly. One of five sub-games is accessed at these locations by choosing from a random icon bar: slapping, cracker eating, pie fight, hospital game and boxing. Every time a location is visited, a turn is used up.

Other icons are also available, including a dollar (the Stooges find a random amount of cash in the next location), question mark (rewarded either with money or a threatening visit from the evil banker), trivia (correct responses are exchanged for money) and a mousetrap. This latter icon snaps off one of the player's fingers: if all are lost the game ends.

Empty squares lead to the slapping game: Moe stands with Curly on his right and Larry to his left, delivering chastisement to both. Slapping, punching, poking and kicking slows down the selection hand which cycles through the choices; missing speeds it up.

The cracker eating contest involves Curly sitting down to a bowl of oyster stew and manipulating his spoon to get the crackers floating on top. $10 are awarded for each cracker, and $50 per bowl.

The pie fight pits the Three Stooges against computer-generated opponents on opposite sides of a room. Hitting opponents makes money, and throwing all the pies doubles the total amount. If the Stooges are hit five times, the sub-game ends.

As doctors, the trio face a vertically scrolling dodge 'em game in an attempt to reach the operating theatre in time. Colliding with five patients ends the sequence.

Finally, in the boxing sub-game Curly is entered for a fight, and a violin is required to drive him berserk. Larry sets out to find one in a horizontally scrolling dodge 'em game set across city sidewalks. If he returns before the end of the last round a bonus is awarded.



Software comedy is a tricky subject to handle successfully, but thankfully, Three Stooges isn't without its humorous moments. The use of digitised film frames and silly sub-games has helped to retain that aura of slapstick cinema, at least to a certain extent. Covering an unexpectant face with pastry and pie filling, driving through patients in hospital corridors and running over a shocked canine on a cluttered sidewalk all bring a smile to the face of the player – the first few times they happen. To stay with the game after that is a battle against slow and intrusive disk access, sub-game repetition and the headache induced by the annoying speech. Credit must go to the game designers for coming up with some clever ideas, but unfortunately the entire game is just too repetitive to be worth recommending.

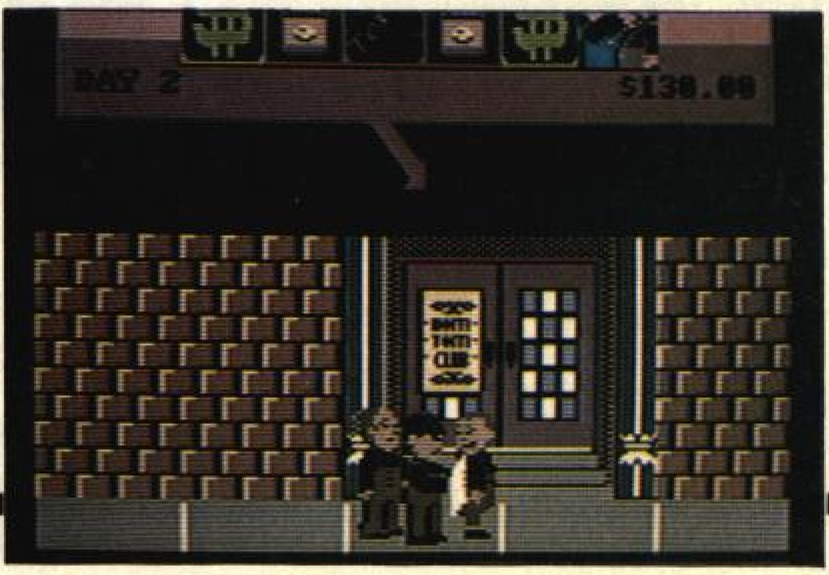


Fans of the comic trio are going to be a little disappointed, since this is only halfway to being a decent game. All the potential is there: a series of sub-games set across an original boardgame format, a couple of interesting concepts (the pie-fighting and slapping) and an aim tie it all together. Unfortunately, the sub-games are a letdown (the horizontal and vertical scrollers offer nothing new and the cracker eating contest is unremarkable), and the graphics – apart from the excellent digitised pics – are bland and blocky (our heroes look like pork sausages in suits). The speech, though good, soon becomes annoying, the wait between sub-games is too long and the disk access is a bit of a pain . . . It's worth a look, but don't expect too much.



This is an odd piece of entertainment indeed, and I'm surprised that someone has been able to think up sub-games which could have any firm link with the Stooges. The slapstick nature of the characters has been adequately transferred to computer with the aid of speech and digitised graphics. Gameplay, however, is made saddeningly tedious by overlong pauses between sub-games, caused by intrusive disk access and unnecessary lingering on screens where nothing is happening. The Stooge sprites themselves are chunky and indistinct, lowering the otherwise high standard of graphic representation. The speech is also repeated to the point where it becomes an ear-grating annoyance. The sub-games themselves, though simplistic, are reasonably playable, but the slow pace of the game takes the edge off the fun.

► **Could these blocky characters really be Curly, Larry and Mo?**



PRESENTATION 46%
Good on-screen presentation marred by slow disk access and very annoying delays.

GRAPHICS 69%
Blocky and uninspired characters set against reasonable but unvaried backdrops. The digitised pictures are excellent, however.

SOUND 63%
Some fuzzy snippets of speech and reasonably 'cute' sound effects.

HOOKABILITY 72%
Six different and playable events and a specific aim prove initially appealing.

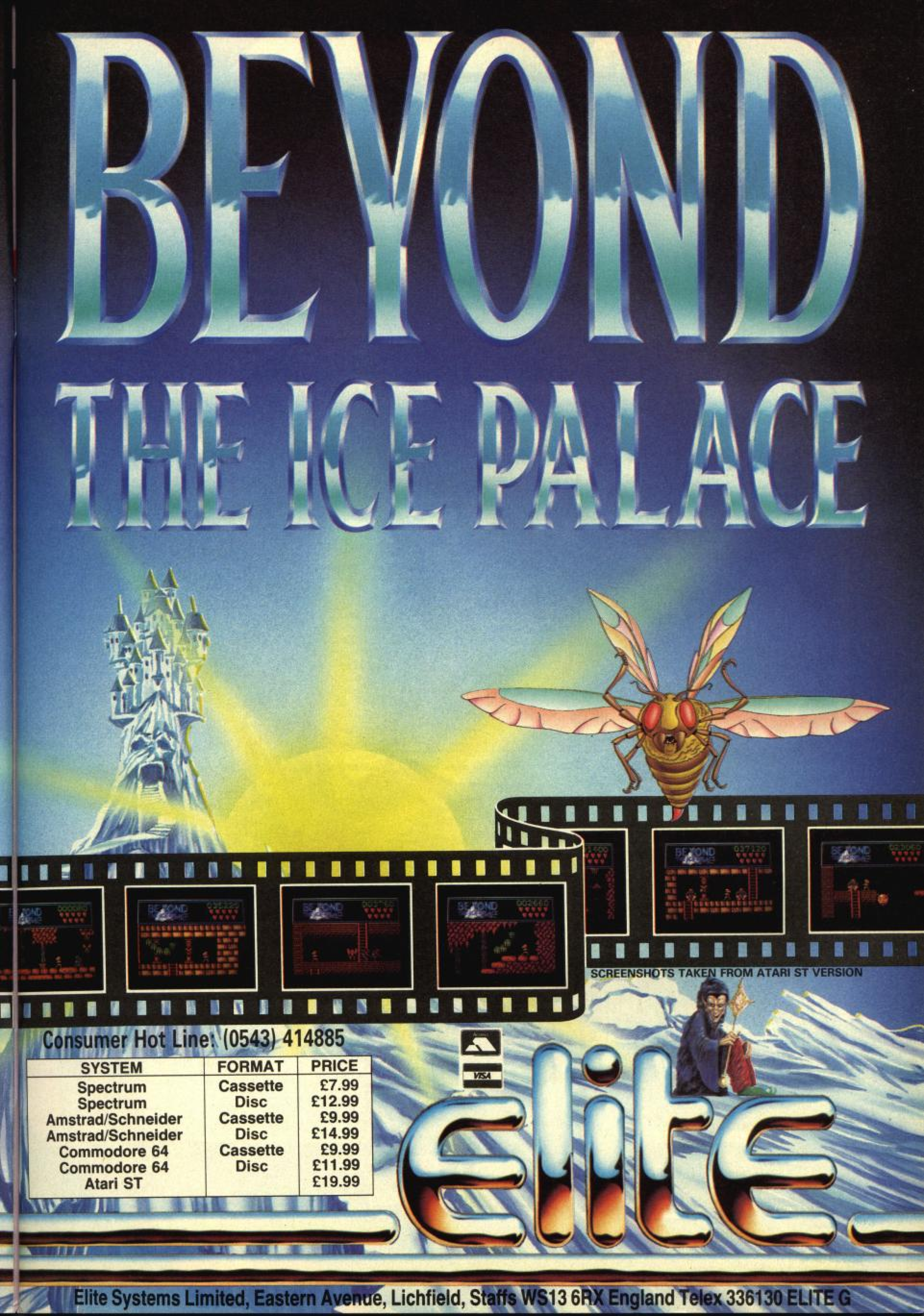
LASTABILITY 30%
The gameplay is surprisingly easy, and consists of little more than reworkings of old formats.

OVERALL 46%
A disappointing translation of the comic trio, lacking in diversity and appeal.

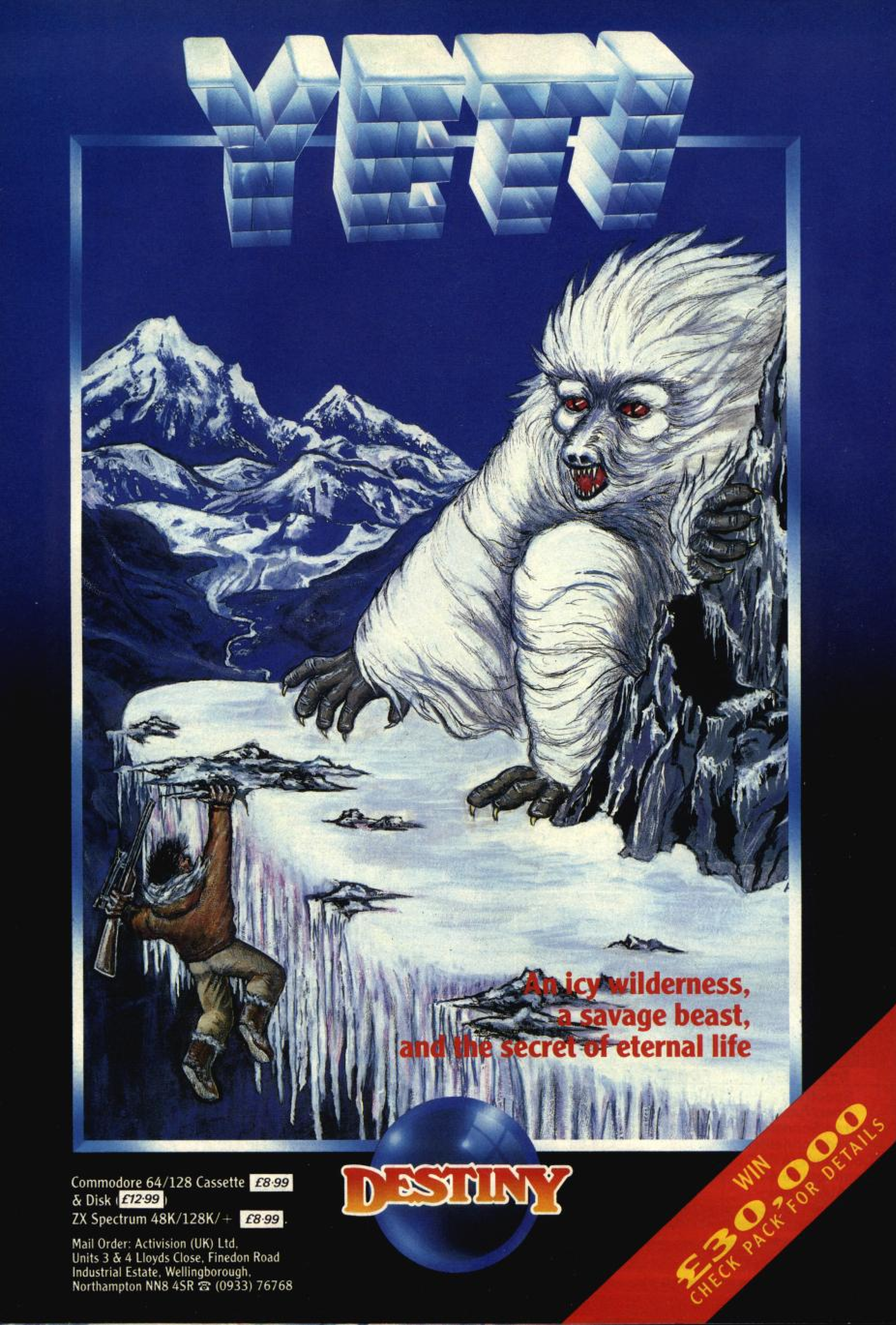
Beyond the Ice Palace and to the North, legend tells of a mystical land where strange creatures dwell. It is a land of fantasy and magic, of goblins and ghosts, of good and evil.

Recently, there has been great upset in the balance of good and evil in these lands. The forces of evil have been burning down the forests, destroying the homes and lives of the simple woodcutters.

One night, a meeting was held between the ancient and wise spirits of the woods. A decision was made to appoint a single person to be responsible for returning the balance to the lands once again by banishing the evil back from where it came. They blessed a sacred arrow with the powers of the woods, which would summon a spirit in times of need, and shot it into the air; whoever found the arrow would find themselves in an adventure of fantastic importance . . .



SYSTEM	FORMAT	PRICE
Spectrum	Cassette	£7.99
Spectrum	Disc	£12.99
Amstrad/Schneider	Cassette	£9.99
Amstrad/Schneider	Disc	£14.99
Commodore 64	Cassette	£9.99
Commodore 64	Disc	£11.99
Atari ST		£19.99


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An icy wilderness,
a savage beast,
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Units 3 & 4 Lloyds Close, Finedon Road
Industrial Estate, Wellingborough,
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NORTHSTAR

Gremlin Graphics, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick with keys

By 2499, mankind is caught in the grip of terrible overpopulation. Civil unrest and starvation force the Earth Lords to create the Northstar space station: designed to house tens of thousands of self-sufficient people, it seems like the answer. However, one day near completion a party of scientists don't return . . .

Arriving at the space station, it's apparent that an alien force has invaded. The player is assigned the task of destroying these lifeforms and re-activating the life support systems by making his way to the project centre.

Each of the ten levels push-scrolls horizontally in both directions: the character runs, but only jumps sideways if already moving. The space station consists of obstacles, which are cleared platform style, and alien opponents. Aliens include patrol troops and bouncing pods, initially despatched by the player's extendable claw. Five other kinds of weapon are collected, including a smart bomb. When the end of a level is successfully reached, the player is transported, via a lift, deeper into the space station.

The screen is divided into the level display and an information panel beneath. This details the player's score, lives remaining, oxygen level and any weapons collected. Score is increased by shooting alien troops and bouncing pods, and destroying specific stationary containers which release bonus points. Oxygen constantly runs down during the mission, and is only replenished when the end of a level is reached. Should the oxygen run out, or if the player touches an alien or falls down a hole, one of four lives is lost.



▲ *Northstar*



Very much in the Exolon/Game Over **mould,** Northstar **combines slick graphics and great sound with some incredibly frustrating gameplay. One of the main problems is that you often reach parts of the landscape where you have to commit yourself to jump across a gap, with no idea whether there's a hazard present or not. If there is you have no way of avoiding it and you die. Another annoyance is that if you're standing near the edge of a platform, you can get hit by an oncoming alien – which is infuriating! Having said that,** Northstar **is challenging and addictive (in a masochistic sort of way), and is a fine example of its genre.**



Northstar **has the same combination of frustration and appeal found in games such as** Army Moves **and** Game Over. **The frustration is a result of an awkward control method and ungenerous collision detection: there isn't quite enough manoeuvrability in your character as he slides and slowly jumps, the rapid pace at which the action progresses leading to some very annoying deaths. The appeal lies in the graphical presentation (the backdrops are colourful and detailed) and the desire to overcome this frustration – the first level is relatively easy, but later ones are horrible! The extendable weapon is both novel and a pain, because it occasionally requires too much luck to synchronise jumping and blasting: a situation marginally retrieved by other weapons. Had the firepower been greater or the control a little tighter,** Northstar **would have been excellent; as it is, it falls short of a higher accolade.**



Aaagh! Another item of averageness has me screaming in my seat! General gameplay is unbelievably bland, comprising keeping the fire button held down to keep the mechanical arm going, and running about over a garish landscape of platforms. Worded like that it almost sounds interesting, but believe me, it isn't. Not only is Northstar **dull, it's incredibly frustrating, with collision detection which is merciless to the point of being unrealistic (running into aliens which are on a platform above the player for instance). I lost so many lives without getting anywhere that I wondered why I was still playing, and then I realised it was only to see if progress made the game any less tedious. Well, if it does, I didn't get far enough to prove it. I wouldn't number this among the worst games of the month (it being that kind of month), but I wouldn't recommend you buy it without a preliminary test.**

▶ **Gremlin's *Northstar*: colourful graphics belie a sluggish control method and constant frustration**



PRESENTATION 79%
Gorgeous title screen and clear screen display, but the awkward control method limits the enjoyment gleaned from the action.

GRAPHICS 85%
Colourful, detailed and varied levels and reasonable, if unimaginative, sprites.

SOUND 80%
Option between an atmospheric in-game soundtrack and decent sound effects. Reasonable title screen.

HOOKABILITY 79%
The urge to progress is balanced against the frustration of the game's imposing luck element and occasionally irksome collision detection.

LASTABILITY 69%
Ten levels of increasingly difficult jump 'n' kill action marred by the necessity of learning patterns.

OVERALL 77%
An irritating but enjoyable shoot 'em up.

ZZAP! TEST

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION II

US Gold, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk , joystick only

●The long-awaited sequel to one of the greatest 64 games of all time

GOLD MEDAL AWARD

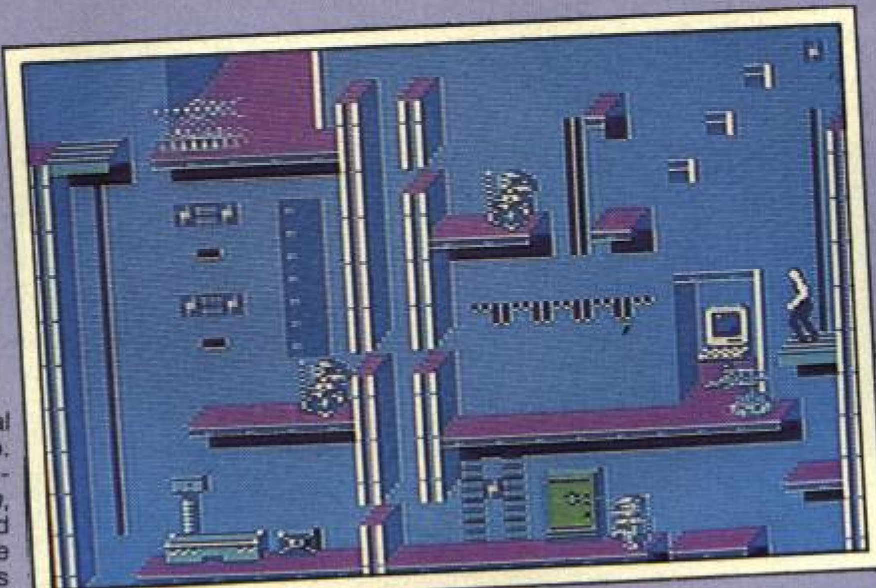
It's been two years since Special Agent 4125's last tough job. They called the Elvin Atombender affair an *Impossible Mission*, but 4125 proved otherwise, and since then he's been able to laze around on foreign beaches, his long-term assignment – to infiltrate a gang of Mediterranean Time-Share salesmen. He often likes to reminisce about the heady days of robot confrontations, of leaping sparks and leaping gaps . . . Such wistful memories are one day interrupted by the IMA Special Terrorist Unit informing him of the return of Atombender, this time with a missile with which he intends to destroy the world. Headquarters know there's only one man capable of defeating the mad genius again, so 4125 is immediately despatched to Atombender's eight-tower complex in the country, on *Impossible Mission II*.

Play begins eight hours from the launch, with 4125 in a lift shaft in a randomly-selected tower, only a swift jog away from one of the complex's many rooms. Each room is a clutter of platforms and lifts, patrolled by robot guards which the player negotiates by running, crouching and somersaulting. On the platforms are objects pertinent to the function of the particular tower, from cars in the garage tower to exercise bikes in the gymnasium.

The intrepid agent's overall objective is to find musical sequences which, when played together, open the express elevator door to take him to Atombender's missile control room. His more immediate task, however, is to search each object in each tower until he finds the component parts of numeric codes which open the security doors accessing neighbouring towers. Standing in front of the object and pushing up on the joystick produces a box containing a diminishing bar which represents how much of the object remains to be examined. Should a hazardous situation arise, 4125 can break off his search and return later to continue where he left off.

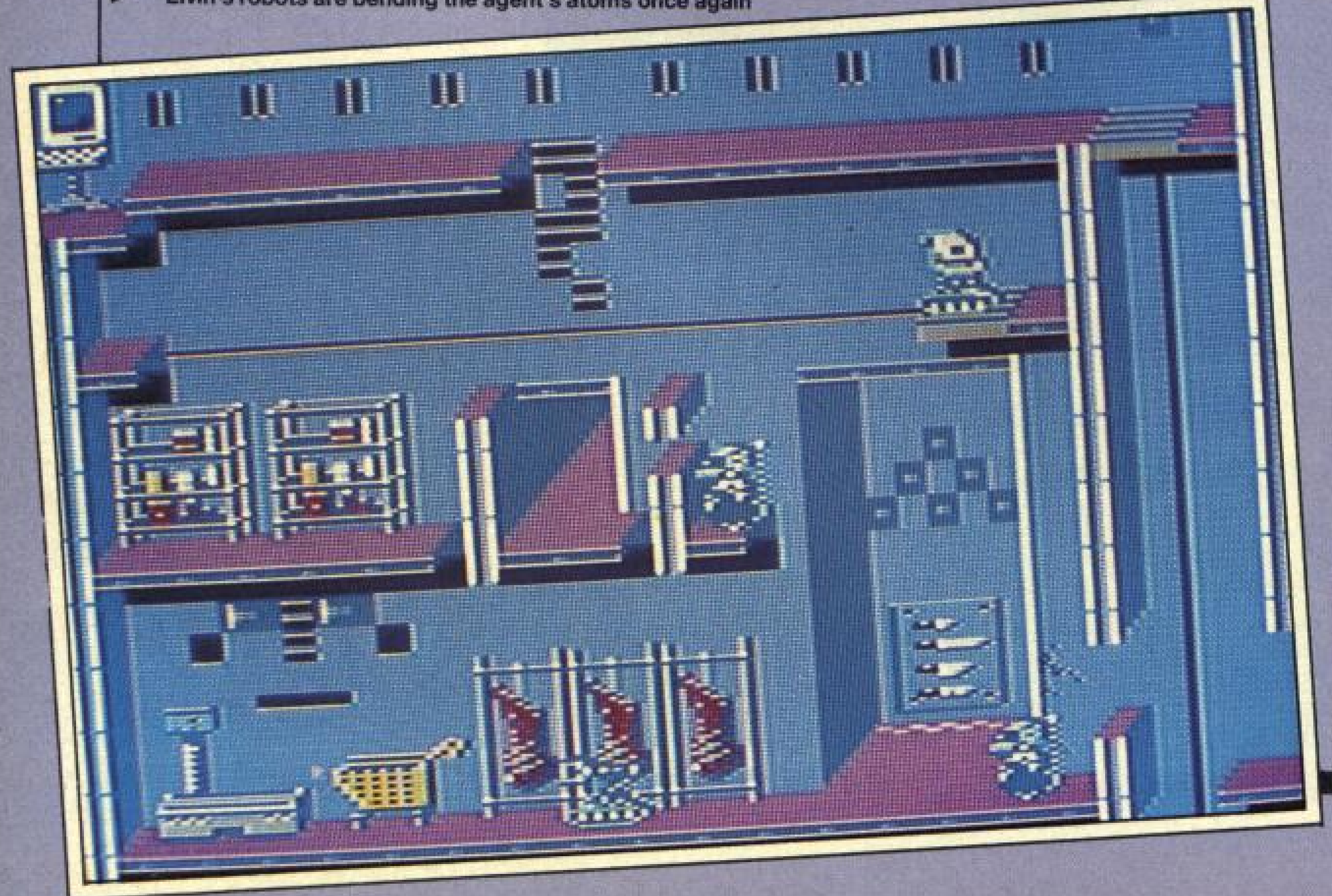
If an examination doesn't produce part of the security code it can prove fruitless, but more frequently turns up items to aid the player in his quest. These are security terminal commands which allow the player to change some of a room's features by accessing an on-screen computer. The screen then changes to show icons representing time bombs, mines, temporary robot deactivation, platform movement and room illumination. A count of each type of command collected is also displayed, as using one depletes 4125's supply.

Six types of robot patrol the catwalks, each having its own malevolent methods of agent elimination. The basic Sentrybot is armed with a gun which delivers a plasma discharge, fatal to any human within its six-feet range. Minebots crawl about the plat-



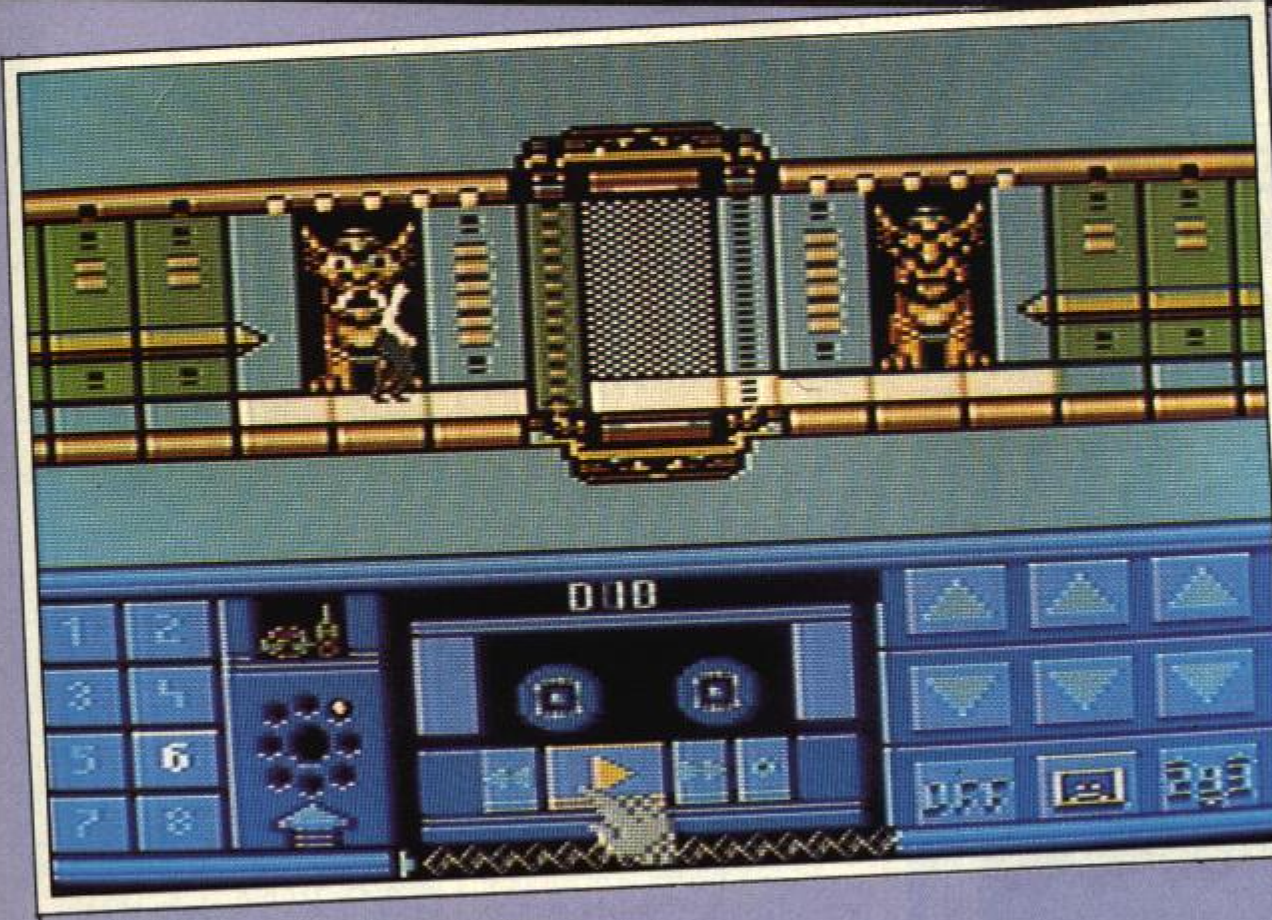
► **Look before you leap . . .**

► **Elvin's robots are bending the agent's atoms once again**



Even though Impossible Mission II **lacks the appealing originality of its predecessor, the graphical improvement and increased depth in gameplay make it brilliantly compelling. The presentation is generally good: apart from the unobtrusive disk access, everything is polished from the gorgeous title screen to the highscore table (saved to disk). The basic features are the same – the speech, a combination of intelligent and dumb robots and super smooth animation throughout – but the overall gameplay has been enhanced: the sound seems crisper, time bombs and light switches have been included, new robots have been added. These elements merge to create the same superb combination of addictive platform action (the individual rooms are deviously designed) and horrible puzzles. It's a great sequel to a brilliant game, and fully deserves a place in any self-respecting games player's collection.**





▶ **Music won't open those inter-level barriers . . .**

forms laying mines while the outwardly similar Pestbots do nothing but ride the moving platforms, taking pleasure in moving one just as 4125 is about to land on it. Squatbots remain in one place, constantly extending and retracting like small lifts. If he's careful, these can give 4125 an extra jumping boost, but can just as easily crush him against the ceiling. The very common Bashbot is fitted with a mechanical grabber which takes hold of anyone it detects and pushes them off its platform, usually into empty space! The less common Suicidebot lives up to its name by grasping the nearest agent and leaping off the platform with him, thus dragging him to his doom.

Apart from contact with a robot, death frequently occurs by mistiming a jump and falling through the floor. The player is quickly reincarnated at the entrance to the room but six minutes are deducted from his time limit.

Time remaining is checked on the pocket computer which fills the lower part of the screen when 4127 is in a corridor. This also displays a schematic of the tower and its two neighbours, with the ability to call up similar plans of all eight towers. The two main functions of the computer are the assembly of the three-digit numeric codes and the musical sequence. As numbers are collected, they're logged into the computer, and the player uses it to alter their order until the correct combination is found. Musical sequences found in blown safes are recorded onto the computer's miniature cassette deck which has standard motor controls to allow the sequences to be edited together as they are found.

After duplicate sequences have been eliminated and the tune is complete, 4125 enters the express elevator, and then the control room. Apart from the swarm of robots, this room is occupied by three terminals, but only one halts the countdown – the other two impart instant death on the unfortunate agent.

Should time eventually run out, the game and the world both come to an end. The player's score is then calculated, based on numbers, objects and music found, towers completed and time remaining.

Following up one of the greatest ever computer games is a very difficult thing, but Epyx have managed to produce a worthy sequel. The gameplay is fundementally the same as the original, with Agent 4125 negotiating a platform environment, but there are many new twists. Elvin's lair is split into eight towers of increasing difficulty, with some very tricky screens to explore. There are new robot guards, including kamikazes and lift movers, as well as some of the old favourites. There are also plenty of new hazards to avoid. Many screens have been extremely well designed to catch out even the most wary of Agents, and plenty of lateral thinking is required to reach the more inaccessible pieces of furniture. Just for good measure, there are also plenty of objects to collect and time bombs and land mines are available for the destruction of floors and robots – and pieces of furniture if you're not careful! I love the way the game is structured, with the Agent having to find both the codes to enable him to move from tower to tower and the tune for the express elevator to Elvin's lab. The best thing of all is the new Pocket Computer, which allows you to splice and re-record the tune so that it activates the express lift. It's a brilliant idea, and drags you right into the action. All this is played against the clock, with six minutes being knocked off the time limit every time the Agent becomes unstuck. This doesn't sound too bad at first, but start making mistakes and that time limit starts diminishing very rapidly indeed! The game is excellently presented and has a series of superb backdrops, drawn with amazing attention to detail. Some of the robot sprites are a little indistinct, but overall the graphics generate just the right ambience. One disappointing aspect is the sound – it's almost exactly the same as the original. The effects do generate a superb atmosphere, but it's a shame they couldn't have been improved even more. Impossible Mission II **is an incredibly challenging, compelling and addictive game, and I've played it more than I've played anything else in years.**



A follow-up to such a classic as Impossible Mission **has quite a job on its hands if it's to avoid being a total disappointment. Any such fears are quickly proved groundless by a few games of** Impossible Mission II**, which, if anything, improves on the timeless classic with superior graphics, more variety in backdrops, and even more devilish obstacles. The only** very **slight disappointment is that some new snatches of that superb digitised speech weren't added to give players of the original something a little extra. The new robots are an inspired addition, and prove even more wicked than their older counterparts, particularly the beguilingly innocuous Pestbot, which whips platforms out from under the player without a moment's notice. The robots' cunning is only matched by the design of some of the rooms, which are at first glance impossible and only prove otherwise after much loss of life, necessitating long hours spent testing strategies. If you want more of a challenge than a platform game has ever given you before, try** Impossible Mission II **for size.**



PRESENTATION 90%
Comprehensive instructions and excellent on-screen display. The disk version has a very useful Save Game facility.

GRAPHICS 92%
Great sprite animation and tremendous attention to detail on backdrops.

SOUND 83%
The same marvellous speech effects as *IM* with a pleasant title tune.

HOOKABILITY 93%
Fiendish platform-puzzles prove horribly addictive.

LASTABILITY 94%
It's supposed to be impossible, and it'll take much playing to prove otherwise.

OVERALL 96%
More superb a sequel than anyone could have hoped for.

TARGET RENEGADE

Imagine, £8.95 cass, £12.95 disk, joystick only

Being the hardest man in Scumville is no life for a deep-down, honest-to-goodness family man. If it isn't a guy's girlfriend being kidnapped, it's his brother being murdered. Poor Matt – cut down in the midst of his investigations of gangland dealings by the vicious hood known only as Mr Big. Blinded by thoughts of revenge, his street-fighting renegade brother takes it upon himself to settle his scores on any villains he can get hold of, hoping that this will eventually lead him to the odious den of the arch-villain.

As well as being able to move over each scrolling level, the player has at his disposal eight point-scoring manoeuvres, including jump kicks, punches, ducking and shrugging off opponents. Hitting weapon-wielding thugs causes them to drop their implements of ill-will for the player to pick up and use, increasing the effectiveness of each strike. Taking hits from the fists of hostile urban warriors saps pixels from a bar representing the player's endurance, until exhaustion removes one life from his complement of five. Each level is played against the clock, with death encroaching as the seconds tick by.

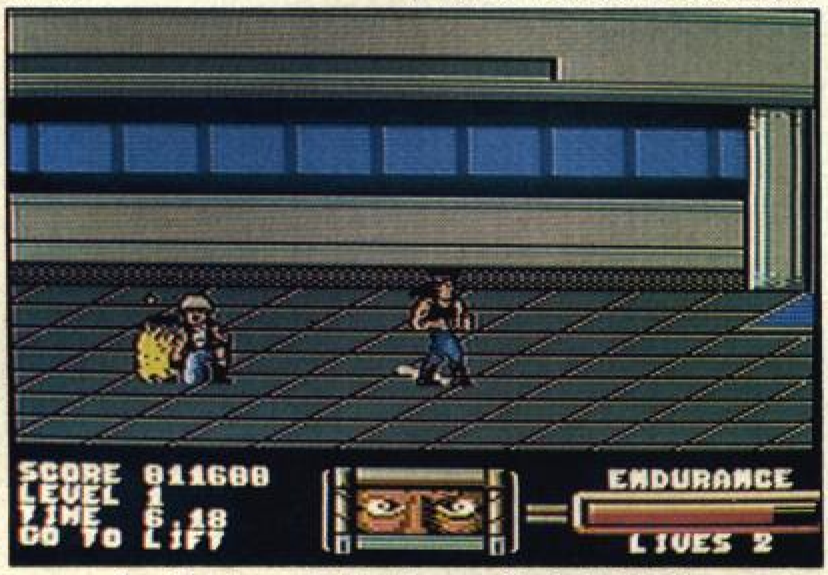
Five scenes stand between the player and Mr Big. Play begins in a multi-storey car park where a gang of motorcyclists are coaxed off their machines with a well-placed kick and thumped into submission before play progresses outside.

In the fresh evening air of Seedy Street, 'ladies of the night' forget femininity and proceed to take the player apart. They are joined by their gun-toting pimp with thankfully limited ammunition.

The third encounter is set in a park, where a gang of skinheads do their darnedest to liquidise the player's meaty frame with non-stop GBH.

The penultimate level, a shopping mall, is the haunt of the local Beasty Boys fan club, who are also in the pay of Mr Big. As well as lashing out at the player with punches and kicks, they set their large and ferocious bulldogs on him. Several choice blows later, the way is clear for entry into the final location.

Mr Big's centre of operations is a seedy bar where hordes of his hardest heavies hang out. On entering, they pounce on the player hoping to pound him to a pulp, but fast fighting fazes the flabby freaks until finally Mr Big emerges, tough as old boots with spikes in the toes. All that remains is for the player to mete out some street justice on Public Enemy Number One, and avenge Matt's murder!



► Turning your back on the opposition isn't advisable, even when they're on their knees



Not being easily motivated towards on-screen pugilism, I was surprised to find the atmosphere created by Target Renegade was sufficiently strong to reawaken the animal in me (though the exact species of animal I'm keeping to myself). The outstanding quality of the graphics is striking, with sprites that wouldn't look out of place in a cartoon film, and these provide a suitably strong hook to draw you into the game. The action is sufficiently fast and furious and exhibits some clever touches, such as a biker who sneaks up behind the player and holds him while his partner beats hell out of him from the front. After a while I found that, while the graphics were varied, the gameplay was less so. Many of the baddies are easily beaten by moving up to them, holding the joystick in the PUNCH position and repeatedly pressing the fire button. Still, if that kind of fighting is your scene there's no other reason why you shouldn't get hold of this.



First impressions are very offputting: the action appears hopelessly difficult, since frustratingly precise and sometimes illogical timing is required to produce results. Getting caught, garotted and beaten up by thugs time and time again creates frustration beyond belief. However, practice really does encourage progress, and the more you play it the more addictive it becomes. The good thing is that it's not just a simple beat 'em up: a whole range of different characters with individual skills and personalities are combatted with unique strategies: level one depends on getting hold of a club, level two on your skill at avoiding bullets . . . Visually and aurally it's well above average: your character is suitably muscle-bound and brilliantly animated, with reasonably detailed and colourful backdrops to match; the sound complements the rugged action perfectly. Overall it's varied and addictive, but be warned: it's really tough!



The beautifully animated sprites are the first indication that Target Renegade is far superior to its forerunner. Each one has been drawn with incredible attention to detail, and look like tiny cartoon characters rather than computer sprites. The backgrounds are also better than the original, and each level is far longer. The gameplay has also been improved – it's tougher, with an intelligent control method (everything is done from the joystick), extra moves and the availability of a baseball bat to help despatch the opposition. The icing on the cake is an excellent end sequence, which gives the player the incentive to battle all the way through the game. Target Renegade is a brilliant sequel, and should be looked up by those who prefer to settle their scores with fists and feet rather than laser guns.

PRESENTATION 78%
Smart loading screen, good control method and a sane multiload.

GRAPHICS 93%
Cartoon quality sprites, with suitable backgrounds.

SOUND 72%
Above average soundtracks and FX.

HOOKABILITY 86%
Uncluttered gameplay and superb graphics quickly bind you to the game.

LASTABILITY 82%
Plenty of plug-uglies to put down.

OVERALL 84%
Superb graphics turn a good fighting game into a very good one.



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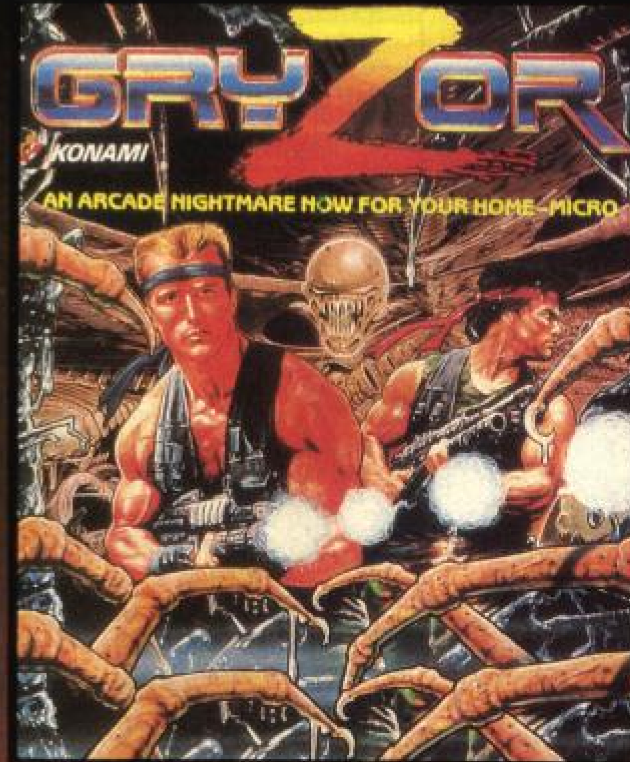
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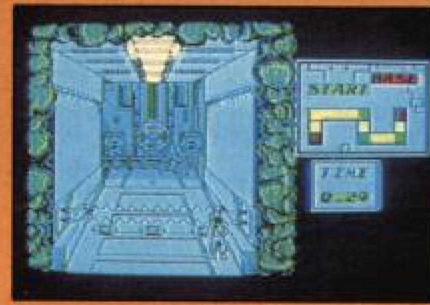
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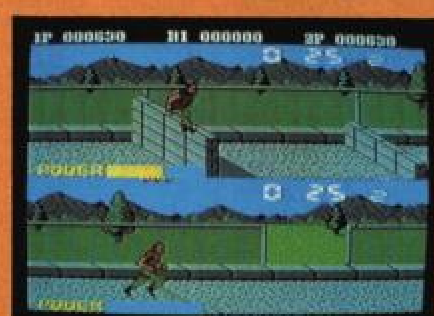
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VAMPIRE'S EMPIRE

Magic Bytes, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick only

Doctor Van Helsing, Dracula's eternal adversary, has returned to dispatch the evil Count for all time with his armoury of a set of mirrors and his wits.

Taking the role of the vampire exterminator, the player is captive



▶ Is that *really* a naked woman?



Beneath the uninspired graphics lurks a decent puzzle game, which unfortunately is never given the chance to escape. The backdrops are badly drawn and gaudily coloured, leading to confusion because all the locations are indistinguishable, and the sprites are blocky and poorly animated. The scrolling is activated too near to the edge of the screen and consequently some monsters are impossible to avoid because Van Helsing always slides to a halt. It's also unbelievably frustrating to set up the mirrors only to find one misplaced . . . Vampire's Empire **is far from amusing.**



So where have Magic Bytes gone wrong with Vampire's Empire? **For a start, each level is a huge maze of platforms to be negotiated by an extremely wayward string of ping-pong balls (apparently a ray of light). It's hardly worth using the mirrors, because by the time you've selected the right one, the ray has bounced off the top of the screen never to be seen again. Directing the light with the crystal ball is no better – after briefly moving in the right direction, the ray thinks better of it and chooses somewhere else to go. Hence, the chances of getting the ray** and **Dracula onto the exit block would take the patience of a saint and more perseverance than any sane person posesses. The awful control problems the player has with Van Helsing only make things worse, so you switch off long before you've got your teeth into the game.**

in a labyrinthine dungeon of over 160 eight-way push-scrolling screens.

An information panel beneath the playing area details the player's score, energy and time remaining, and the currently activated object. Score is increased by destroying any of the Count's evil aides – such as large rats, venom-spitting heads, snakes and naked women who draw Van Helsing inexorably towards them – and collecting and correctly using rays of light. Energy – displayed as a phial of blood – is severely depleted by continued contact with dungeon creatures; if it drains completely, or if the time runs out before the task is complete, the game ends.

PRESENTATION 46%
Reasonable instructions but unattractive screen display and awkward control method.

GRAPHICS 25%
Sparse and badly drawn backdrops match the blocky, gaudy and poorly animated sprites.

SOUND 18%
A few whines and bleeps fail to convey any kind of comic atmosphere.

HOOKABILITY 24%
The dullness and similarity of the graphics and poor control method repel any addictive qualities.

LASTABILITY 19%
A large and complicated task ruined by its poor aural and visual implementation.

OVERALL 20%
A poor attempt to combine arcade adventure and puzzle action.

LEE ENFIELD IN THE TOURNAMENT OF DEATH

Infogrames, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick or keys

Lee Enfield is in the Count of Savoy's Castle, where the Holy Shroud is guarded by the soldiers of the Yellow Shadow.

He's on a mission to find the relic before the Yellow Shadow destroys it. Armed only with his fists, he explores the flick-screen castle in search of objects to assist him. The screen display occupies approximately one quarter of the screen, the rest consisting of a static shot of the hero and his adversary.



First impressions are of instant disgust as you realise that the playing area takes up a h-u-ge quarter **of the screen, the rest taken up by a stupid kid's drawing of a knight in putrid armour. Mind you, this flaccid excuse of a picture seems almost good when you take a look at what's in the playing screen. Vile, gaudy blocks of colours swill around in an aimless, carefree manner evoking an instant feeling of nausea. The gameplay stirs the bile in a similar way as Lee, fashionably dressed in lurid lego bricks, jerks unresponsively around the landscape. Examining objects is a joke – manoeuvring him close enough to one is difficult enough, but they're so badly drawn, you can't tell what they are anyway! The final insult is the price tag . . .**



Three kinds of opponent are the main obstacle to progress: foot soldiers, guards and bears all attack on sight. Pressing fire and wiggling the joystick makes Lee punch his opponents until their resistance fails. During a fight, his strength and health are shown as two level indicators.



It's hard to know where to start criticising this game, since every aspect of it is awful. The most obvious point is the horribly minuscule screen display, characterised by its garish, gaudy and indistinct backdrops. The combat sequences appear more like some hideous dance to the annoyingly atonal music, which whines its miserable way in an endlessly repeated sequence. The control method is very awkward: pushing the joystick left or right shoves the character a few 'yards', and examining objects can be very frustrating as a result. If you see this on the shelf, run past it.

PRESENTATION 20%
Adequate instructions but clumsy control and dire on-screen presentation.

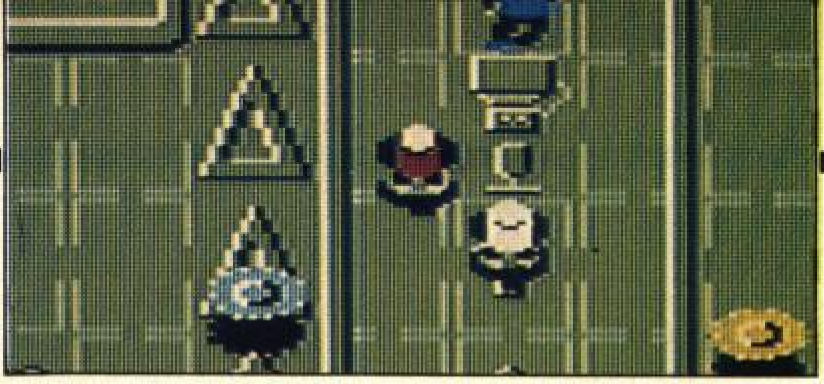
GRAPHICS 12%
Tiny playing area inhabited by rubbish sprites and backdrops.

SOUND 18%
A horrible unmusical cacophony forms the soundtrack.

HOOKABILITY 20%
Little initial interest is gleaned from exploration and combat.

LASTABILITY 3%
The illogicality and tedium of the action coupled with the appalling graphics discourages further play.

OVERALL 8%
An incredibly badly presented and unplayable arcade adventure.



PANDORA

Firebird, £8.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick with keys

Having roamed space for almost 200 years, the generation ship Pandora has gone haywire. With the destabilisation of its Bio-Rhythmic Stabilisers, the computer is exhibiting pseudo-aggressive tendencies. As an Intergalactic Salvage Operator, the player's mission is to board and investigate the ship.

The screen is divided into a four-way scrolling playing area and a character status display panel: this is subdivided into windows which reveal the player's condition and inventory, changing according to the situation. For example, when standing over a dead opponent, the *Dead Char* window displays the dead character's inventory. The *Status* window reveals current health from Mighty to Dire; should the player's energy expire, the game ends.

Interacting with other characters and collecting objects forms a major part of the game: a message appears in the display window detailing which articles another character requires; successful trades reveal otherwise unattainable items. Objects are also collected from plinths; moving against an empty plinth whilst holding an object designed to fit on the plinth places that object onto it. To the left of the start position is a cargo chute: pressing the fire button next to it deposits the currently carried item into the shuttle.

Fighting also plays a role: characters are defeated to release extra items. The salvage operator collects a variety of weapons – including an Iridium mace and a shockwhip – but is otherwise armed only with his fists. Combat involves pressing the fire button when a gauge on the display panel reaches its peak. Different weapons have appropriate strike rates and effects upon the opponent: for example, the mace has a slower strike rate but greater efficiency than fists.

If the salvage operator is defeated in a fight, loses his ID card at any time, or enters a restricted area without the neces-



The idea behind Pandora is a pretty good one, with room for plenty of exploring and interaction between characters and objects. Unfortunately, this is limited to finding out what each character has and what he wants (via totally unsubtle clues), then either looking for a corpse carrying the item, or acquiring it from another character, who only barters away his item, so you have to find what that character wants. And on it goes . . . My games were plagued by confusing instances. On being asked for identification, I placed one of my three acquired ID cards in the HOLDING window, and it was ignored by the guard, who proceeded to beat me up with his electrotruncheon. The instructions offer little enlightenment on the subject and I'm still at a loss as to what I was doing wrong. The rest of the game is well presented, but running about on unlikely errands seems even more pointless than usual, and excitement eventually palls.



Firebird's latest release is basically a Gauntlet clone dressed up as a space thriller in the Paradroid mould. Other aspects are equally unoriginal: the sprites are reminiscent of Sensible Software creations and the title tune is drawn directly from Dune! Behind this familiarity lies a fairly decent game: the individual sequences such as fighting, discovering ID to access restricted areas and collecting and trading with objects proves appealing for a short while. However, the uninspired nature of the action catches up with the gameplay: trading, blasting and arcade adventuring has been done so much better before, and the whole program is let down by the limitations of four-way movement. If you're really keen on this kind of (derivative) action, it's worth a look because the gameplay is varied enough to be attractive. However, the lack of originality means it would have been a brilliant addition to the Silverbird range.

ROAD WARRIOR

CRL, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick with keys

In the year 2000, the annual Death Race is an established event. Bikers race around public freeways on the rampage and the police are unable to stop them. Judging the situation intolerable, the player of *Road Warrior* has custom-built his own car to halt the destruction.

From the title screen four kinds of car – from standard to sporty – are selectable, each shaded with a choice of six colours and armed with front and rear weapons. Weapons are lost by being struck a number of times in the front or rear, but extra firepower and speed-up weapon bonuses are picked up at various points along the courses.

Pressing fire launches the road warrior into the action, the screen scrolling horizontally from left to right over six sections of countryside. A predetermined number of kills is required to reach the next level, beginning with five on the



The action is basic to a fault: driving along one of only six horizontally scrolling levels and blasting vehicles at the front or rear is quickly tedious. The simple Spy Hunter format has been transformed into a very dull shoot 'em up, only rescued by its decent presentation and graphics: at least the four cars are individual and can be embellished with a variety of colour shades. The roadside landscapes are reasonably drawn and varied, but the sound is terrible: a horrible, moaning tune accompanies a couple of feeble beeping and blasting effects. Save your tenner for something more lasting.



The only differences between this and the three and a half year old Spy Hunter is that the latter scrolls vertically and is about 50 times more exciting. The action is repetitive to an extreme, and hardly changes from level to level. Because the gameplay is so simplistic, it takes very little practise to master, and consequently any addictive qualities evaporate within a few goes. The graphics are slick and the general presentation is good, but when they're crippled by gameplay as utterly appalling this, they're not worth a light. Road Warrior is a very limited and overpriced piece of rubbish that wouldn't even make the grade at budget price.



If you thought Spy Hunter was good, wait till you see Road Warrior! It'll prove to you that Spy Hunter was good! But that's not all, for Road Warrior achieves three things: it reorientates the screen; it replaces a really useful arsenal with a set of guns which are all the same and it alerts the player to the fact that CRL have produced another bummer. There's plenty of polish on the game, graphics and soundwise, but you might as well tart up a potato and try to get some enjoyment out of it. The game is ridiculously easy up to the fourth level, whereupon the screen restrictions either drive the player into rocks (ending the game instantly), into motorbikes which have just been destroyed (thus preventing them from being subtracted from the level quota for some reason), or into a booby trap which takes away all your car's weaponry. Take it from me, this isn't a game you want to spend a tenner on.

► **The sideways scrolling *Spy Hunter* format fails to enhance CRL's tepid *Road Warrior*.**



sary authority, he is annihilated by the ship's defence systems, and the game ends.

PRESENTATION 63%
Interesting scenario, competent screen display and unusual opening sequence marred by poor character control and confusing instructions.

GRAPHICS 69%
Polished and colourful four-way scrolling backdrops peopled by derivative and unimaginative sprites.

SOUND 72%
Reasonable remix of the Dune theme and decent heartbeat effects.

HOOKABILITY 71%
The urge to solve puzzles and access restricted areas proves compelling, but the limitations of four-way movement spoil the action.

LASTABILITY 51%
The action quickly becomes tedious because of the derivative and repetitive action.

OVERALL 60%
An interesting adaptation of the *Gauntlet/Paradroid* theme marred by restricted movement and convoluted gameplay.

first.

At the top and bottom of the display, status panels reveal the speed (from 10mph to 89mph), fuel level, points, kills required and lives remaining. Colliding with bikers and cars loses fuel, initially at 799 units, and increases the number of kills necessary to reach the next level. Should the fuel level reach zero or the car crash with parked cars or roadside obstacles, the game ends.

PRESENTATION 68%
Four choices of car and six colours to choose from; otherwise reasonable screen display and sparse instructions.

GRAPHICS 77%
Smooth scrolling and fairly detailed backdrops complemented by colourful sprites.

SOUND 26%
Whining, annoying tune coupled with two hopeless sound effects.

HOOKABILITY 16%
The urge to view the next landscape is the only pull.

LASTABILITY 5%
Once you've completed all the courses, nothing but masochism will draw you back.

OVERALL 13%
A neatly presented, but simplistic and very tedious horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up.

BOB WINNER

Loriciels, £9.99, £14.99, joystick with keys

Android Zero, alias Bob Winner is off on a walking tour of the world, taking in Paris, London, New York and the desert wastelands and swamps in between. His destination is a secret temple. So secret is this temple that even Bob himself doesn't know where it is or what he hopes to achieve by reaching it.

Still, every android likes a challenge, and Bob is certainly up against indefinable odds. His arch enemy, 'The Other One', has sent out an army of French boxers with 'arrogant moustaches' who set about our hero in the streets of Paris. On the other side of the channel, Bob comes across more boxing robots in the grounds of Buckingham Palace and on the banks of the Thames. After crossing the Atlantic, Bob meets his nemesis, for there stands 'The Other One', a pistol-packing person who has an unreasonable desire to disconnect the plucky automaton.

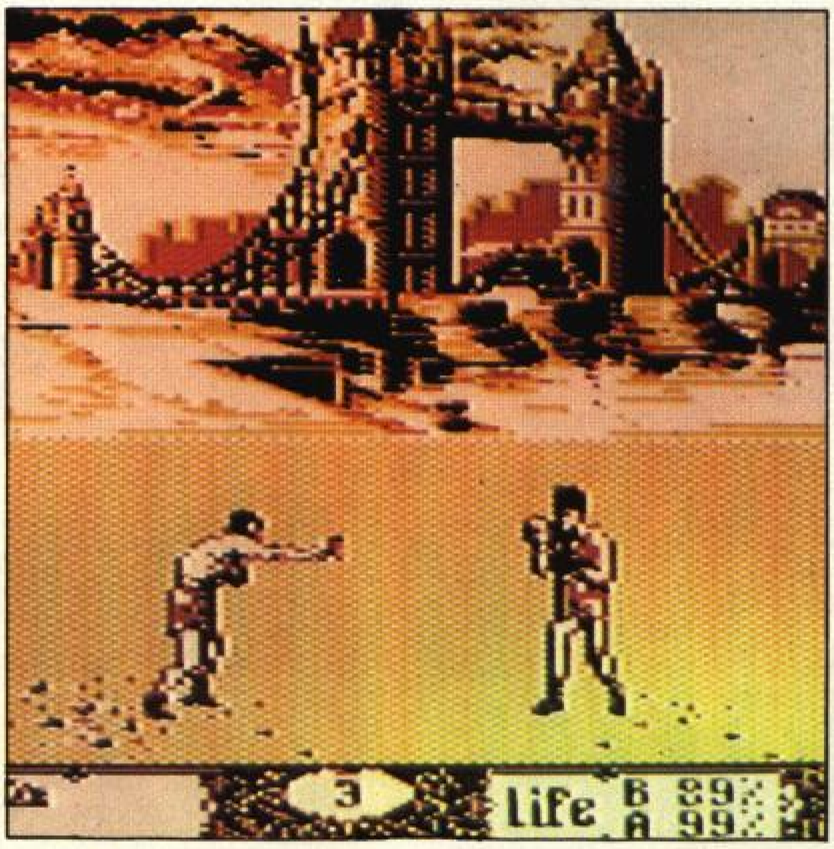
Bob's defence throughout his global adventure, apart from his prodigious agility, is his ability to change his appearance and fighting skills to match those of any opponent. To do this he requires particular items which are often left lying about the place and which, when picked up, allow Bob to kick, box and shoot away at any foes until his energy, or that of his opponent runs out.



Why anyone would want to pay a tenner for this uninspiring mixture of beat 'em up and arcade adventure is beyond me. The instructions are laughable: a combination of poor translation and insufficient explanations only supported by the decently drawn cartoon strip. The digitised backdrops vary from being atmospherically hazy to horribly obscure: all are limp, ineffective and wishy-washy. The main character is slow and poorly animated and his opponents vary from ridiculous killer bees and big, slow bullets to frustrating quicksand; the sound is simply inappropriate and annoying. Everything about the game is weak, and I can't recommend it.



I can't think of many beat 'em ups that are worse than this. Fighting is almost instantly tedious since there are only a couple of moves, and the response to the joystick is very sluggish. The difficulty level goes from one extreme to another. Opponents are despatched with ease by pointing the joystick in one direction and pressing fire at regular intervals. Then, just to make up for the lack of difficulty, crossing swamps is made almost impossible by unbelievably tight collision detection – if you're a pixel out, Bob sinks slowly into the mud and loses a life. The gameplay isn't the only thing that's bad: so are the graphics and sound. Loud digitised backdrops and lanky sprites are accompanied by grating sound effects. The poor presentation and awful title tune are the final nails in the coffin. If Loriciels are going to make any impact on the Commodore market, they've got to do better than this.



▲ **Bob Winner isn't**



Can this game have been as ill-conceived as the accompanying instructions suggest? From blatant fibs about Bob Winner **being 'a brilliant new game', they continue in a most vacuous vein through to a cartoon strip, which takes a step up from** uninformative **to confusing. Nowhere (except in a publicity poster) is the player told that the objective is to reach a secret temple. A secret temple? In New York? What** is **going on? Why does walking between Paris and London take the player through a desert of quicksand and giant wasps? Why are all the digitised backdrops rendered in a three-colour wash? Why does Bob look more like a tourist out for a stroll than an Indiana Jones type hero? Why bother posing such questions when poor fighting gameplay and an overall silliness will have your computer switched off before you can answer any of them?**

PRESENTATION 32%
Awfully slow multiload, even on the disk version. Thoroughly laughable instructions.

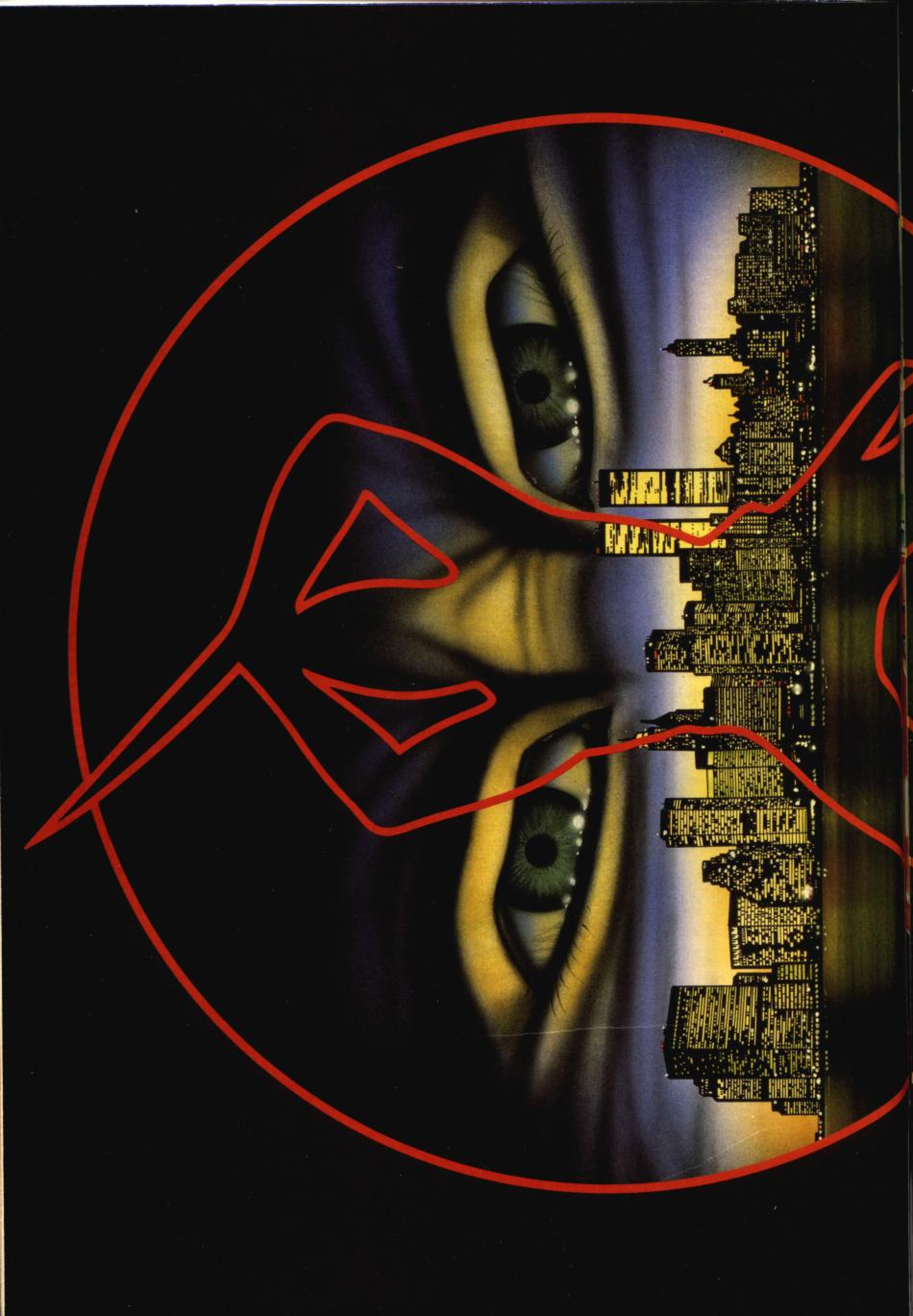
GRAPHICS 41%
Oddly-coloured digitised backdrops and equally strange sprites.

SOUND 25%
'Lots and lots of music' which all sounds the same. Minimal spot FX.

HOOKABILITY 27%
Play is inspired by the desire to see how far off-beam the instructions are.

LASTABILITY 13%
It isn't worth wasting your time on such hopelessly silly and inconsistent gameplay.

OVERALL 12%
Bob certainly doesn't live up to his name.




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ZZAP! RRAP

For the first time this year I can actually open up your letters while sitting outside in the garden on my faithful old deck chair – the Sun has at last decided to show its face, and I think I can safely say that Summer has finally arrived. Having said that, it'll most probably cloud over this evening and pour with rain all day tomorrow. Let's hope not!

WHAT ABOUT THE REST OF THE WORLD?

Dear Lloyd,
I'd just like to express my views on a few subjects:

Firstly, I think that last month's letters were a great improvement from previous issues!. Stephen Hewson's letter of the month on 'multiloaders' was excellent, proving both informative and entertaining. I feel I must also congratulate you, Lloyd for being such a good 'letter-answerer'. Your replies are often humorous and always (well, usually!) unbiased towards subjects and really set you apart from other similar letter sections in certain unmentionable magazines.

Now, on with something I'd really like to say.

Even though letters printed in ZZAP! are good, I somehow get the feeling that they are all very petty. Many letters complain about topics niggling the writer but considering the amount of bad things, big things going on in the world which affect or can even destroy peoples' or animals' lives, all these things are extremely minor. Do any of you know for example how much pollution is created every year by power-stations? How many acres of trees are cut down? How many people are killed by so-called freedom fighters, and how many people die of starvation or are homeless? I know I'm not putting it very well, but I think you get my point. Don't be so self-pitying all the time. Compared to some people you live a life of luxury. Remember: however, badly off you are there are always people in a worse state. So please, next time you complain about the price of games or the lack of quality in recent software think about what I've written and, if you're feeling very generous, you could donate the money you set aside for your next game to charity. It'll hardly make a great deal of difference to your life will it, but it could save someone else! I know you think I'm totally nutty and sentimental but I felt I had to get it off my chest.

Arthur Jones, Lincolnshire, DN21 4NF

I thoroughly agree with you. ZZAP! 64 isn't really the place to raise or discuss the issues you raised above – after all, it's supposed to be a fun magazine and you don't really want doom and gloom within its pages – but it's very easy to forget what's happening in the real world. If everyone thought as much about others as they do themselves, the world would be a better place, but sadly I don't think that sort of thing could possibly ever happen. For your thoughtfulness, I've decided to send you a £30 software voucher – you can call me a sentimental old fool if you like!

LM

WHAT HAPPENED TO MEAN STREAK?

Dear Lloyd,
Remember the game by Mirrorsoft called *Mean Streak*, released just before Xmas? Yes you do! Well in the insert of the cover it stated that there was competition built in the game, a prize of a mountain bike worth over £400 for the person who completed it first.

Well, what I want to know is, has any person finished the game and if so when will the results be know.

Like myself, a lot of people must have been tempted and bought the game because you had a chance to finish it and win the prize.

L Price

If you contact Mirrorsoft, I'm sure they'll tell you exactly what they're doing with the competition.

LM

THE STUCK NINJA

Dear Lloyd,
I usually buy your excellent magazine for Hints and POKES listed in it. I bought an excellent game recently called *The Last Ninja*. The graphics and animation are fantastic! The problem is how can I go past the fire-breathing dragon on the first level? My friends and I spent hours and hours of our time trying to figure it out, but to no success. If you could give me the solution to this problem, I'll pay twice for your magazine. Recently, I saw a list of POKEs to give infinite lives for the Ninja but that don't solve the problem of how to get past the dragon! Could you put a map and the solution in your next issue?

John Ling, Sarawak, East Malaysia

Mr Rignall tells me that if you order ZZAP! Issue 29 through the ZZAP! ZZUPERSTORE you'll find Last Ninja *maps and tips which will help you get through the entire game – and you won't even have to pay double for it!!*

LM



THE 16-BIT SICKNESS

Dear Lloyd,
For many a year now I have been buying your magnificent magazine and enjoyed the pleasure of your truthful reviews, views, Mel Croucher's crucial sections etc.

Unfortunately however I have noticed a disease that has crept into ZZAP! which to be honest, degrades your magazine. The infection I am referring to is of course 16-bit machines.

In my opinion (as well as my other 64 owning friends) 16-bit machines have no right to be in a magazine called ZZAP! 64. You should call yourselves ZZAP! 64 and 512.

Three or four pages of 16 bit reviews are just a waste of paper. Here's how:-

1. 64 owners don't read them as they are horrendously jealous of the amazing graphics and sound etc.
2. 16-bit owners don't buy the magazine as they don't want to pay £1.25 for only 4 pages.

The only solutions to the above problems are to either scrap 16-bit pages or for all Commodore 64 owners to buy Amigas or Atari ST's.

You will probably comment on the fact there are only three or four pages in a 100 or so page magazine. Unless stopped these numbers of pages will increase, as can be seen in the Amiga special in the April edition. Please stop this rot.

Danny Coburn, Rosyth, Fife

Well, for a start, the 16-bit section isn't a disease – it's a couple of pages (not three or four pages as you state) in which we tell those who are interested what's going on in the 16-bit world. You seem to have forgotten the fact that there are quite a large number of (lucky) readers out there who own both a Commodore 64 and an Amiga.

LM

MY SICK-MAKING BROTHER

Dear Lloyd,
Just thought I'd drop you a quick line to thank you for printing my little brother's letter in your May 1988 issue. Normally, I have to sneak into his bedroom when he's asleep, grab the latest issue and beat a hasty retreat to the loo, in order to peruse ZZAP! at my leisure. This time it was thrust under my nose accompanied with the words 'Ere, look at this then!'. There it was – page 34, in glorious black and blue – his letter.

Now of course he thinks he is a literary genius and has since become unbearable to live with. He wanders around mumbling comparisons with Shakespeare and Wordsworth. He follows us doggedly around begging us to ask for his autograph and he has even stuck a big gold star on his bedroom door – it has really gone to his head. You must have been hard up for letters to print or had some column space to fill.

So Lloyd – a warning – do not even think about printing any more of his literary lunacy or I will be forced to take the strongest action possible – I will send him to you!!!

Francis Donlevy (Scum's older brother), Harrow, Middx

Well, you're both on equal terms now – so he's got nothing to shout about any more!

LM

THE RRAP SLUMP

Dear Lloyd,
Yet another letter of complaint lands on the ZZAP! doormat. I am writing concerning the decline of what used to be one of the best parts of the magazine – ZZAP! Rrap. Over the last few months there has been a rapid decline in the quantity and quality of letters appearing in ZZAP!, and I have evidence to support my case: Issue 30 – 12 letters, Issue 31 – 16 letters, Issue 32 – 11 letters, Issue 33 – 10 letters, Issue 34 – 9 letters, Issue 35 – 8 letters, Issue 36 – 5 letters. And within the last seven issues only three letters of the month. Now I know you have no control over the quality of letters that arrive at ZZAP!, and as you yourself have stated letter so the month should only be awarded where they are deserved, but surely the letters section deserves more than two and a half pages and five letters (Ish 36). So come on Lloyd, insist on more space, after all if they keep cutting down like they have been doing, you'll be out of a job!

Also, all the letters printed nowadays seem to be complaints (me included). They are either about piracy/prices/crap reviews/crap reviewers etc. Can't anybody come up with something different, like the letter form Benjamen Dehhas (Ish 33) about how he used his 64, *Psychedelia*, and a large video screen to help out at a friends disco. And what's happened to people's sense of humour? In the early days (yawn) letters used to be funny, strange (whatever happened to Norman Psych Fishperson?), short and straight to the point. Now they seem to go on forever about nothing in general. I know I am only stoking my own fire with this letter, but I can only hope it inspires people to write bigger and better things.

Now a couple of (very) minor points. What's happened to Rockford and Thingy in the margins? Doesn't Oli Frey get time to draw them? Finally the Mel Croucher argument, as is so often the case, it all boils down to personal taste and personally I find him unfunny, but I don't insist that he is taken out of the magazine, as I am sure many other people find him amusing, and I can always skip his pages and get straight into the reviews (as I often do) so why all the fuss?

Well, that's about it. An overlong boring letter complaining about overlong boring letters isn't exactly constructive I know, but hopefully it will be the last of its kind (some hope) and brighter letters will once again adorn the pages of ZZAP! Rrap.

Neil Malleh, Irthlingborough, Northants

Asking for more space is all well and good – but when you're going to fill it up with the most boring and awful letters imaginable, you might as well put the space to better use. Take it from me, Issue 36 was an all-time low in terms of letter quality, and those printed were the pick of a rotten crop. Anyway, things are beginning to pick up – I've got all of four pages this month! If you all keep on writing interesting and worthwhile letters, there's no reason why Julian won't give me even more space!

LM

NO MORE NEXUS

Dear Lloyd,
Yes you've guessed it, yet another uncomplimentary letter about a software house, or to be more specific its customer services department.

But first I would just like to give praise, as have many a humble, grovelling, young (23 years old) personage as myself, to the most magnificent computer magazine around (I'm not over doing it too much am I). I also read C&VG, but your magazine excels above the rest in all departments. By the way, computer games in theory have been known to appeal to the younger generation, but I can reveal that there are older generations that are quite good at computer games, my mother included. I think that she could beat even some of the top young players on such games as *Solomons Key* and *Bubble Bobble*. As a matter of fact I find it hard to get on the computer because she's playing games on it for most of the day!

Right, back to the point I made earlier and

the reason I am writing this letter.

I bought a game at Christmas from Boots as a present for my mum. When I tried to load it I found that it wouldn't, so I took it back to the shop. Because of Boots policy I couldn't exchange it for another game, and they didn't have another copy of the game that I purchased there. They said I would have to wait until they had some more stock in.

Not wanting to wait, I sent the faulty tape (*Hades Nebula*) and receipt to Nexus customer services department and allowed the 28 days for delivery as it said on the cassette sleeve.

After not receiving a replacement for over a month I sent them a letter, along with a copy of my original complaint. I am still waiting until this day for a reply and I fear I have lost this tape, and the £9.95 that I paid for it in the first place.

Please could you help in any way if at all possible.

Tony Fisher, Watford, Herts

I'm sorry to say that I can't really help you because at the present time, Nexus is in a state of liquidation.

LM

WHAT ABOUT ROCKFORD

Dear Lloyd,

Congratulations to you and the rest of the ZZAP! team, the mag is brill. I have three main things to say, so I'd better get on with them.

First to all those people who don't like Mel Croucher: stop complaining. I too didn't like him at first, but this was because I never really read UTBW properly and from the start. Then I read 100 All Time Greats, not knowing who the author was, and I found it extremely funny. When I realised Mel was the author I was quite surprised, so I gave his Baud-walk another chance and found it also was extremely funny. So give him a chance!

Point number two: what is happening to Rockford. Am I imagining it or is he appearing less and less. Give him a bigger part please! Also what is happening to the Rrap, this too seems to be getting smaller. Isn't anyone writing to you?

Lastly can I again congratulate the mag on its use of colour and the amount of competitions £1.25 a month I find is well spent.

Neil Bradford, Croydon, Surrey

Both Rockford and Thingy have decided to take a long holiday, so we won't be seeing them for a while. You never know, if enough of you write in, they might be persuaded to cut short their break, and return to these pages.

LM

LOADSAPRAISE

Dear Lloyd,

I'm writing this letter to you to argue against the readers who think that ZZAP! 64 is expensive for its value and is not in the same class as other popular computer magazines. I completely disagree with these claims.

To start with the point that it is expensive: every single page is in full colour, and is also decorated with some tasteful logos and the like. A lot of effort has obviously been put into the writing of it and also the printing. It's difficult to find a misprint or an incorrect spelling or a bad caption in any of the reviews of the games.

Also, there's a clear and well defined index of both the games reviewed in the issue, and a bonus of an index of the advertisers too.

There's the discount section which enables the reader to purchase one or more items with a relative amount of money being deducted – the more games bought, the cheaper things are. This can help people who would like the extra pound or so left in their pocket after buying a game to buy the next issue of their favourite magazine.

As well as this, there is a ZZAP! shop where you can buy loads of memorabilia at quite cheap prices compared to their MRP, especially some brilliant-looking joysticks which are almost always knocked down by at least one pound.

Me, being one of those newly enlightened unfortunate deprived souls have only just in the last six months discovered your ace magazine, and so far I think the content is excellent and will carry on buying it until a magazine which is better than this one is made (I extremely doubt that there ever will be one).

Alex Smith, Maybank, Newcastle

Ahem. Well, we try our best you know!

LM

LOADAGAMES

Dear Lloyd,

What's happening? The last letter I had printed was in issue 28! You're seriously ruining my street cred man! Anyway, let's get on, I haven't got any time to chit-chat. Two big points to talk about which I feel you haven't covered.

ZZAP! RRAP

Who bought *Joe Blade*? Well, for a start, I did. Congrats all round are due to those guys at Players software. What am I chatting about? Well here's the scenario: Me waiting for Joe Blade to load, computer screen flashing with all those psychedelic colours, when suddenly as if from nowhere, on the screen: *Micro Painter*, by Andrew Challis (you know, the guy that used to write for Interceptor before they become Pandora or something).

Then it said, 'Press fire to start Loadagame'. Gee Willikers!! I though a game to play whilst waiting for *Joe Blade*! Cor! What you had to do was glide on arrow round a grid filling up squares whilst avoiding the baddies. Pretty darn simple but pretty darn effective! I liked it so much that I didn't want *Joe Blade* to load! Joking aside though, what a good idea! Why can't more software companies do this? At the moment what we tend to get is a mediocre loading screen and some music – dead city! Come on you big companies! The gauntlet hath been thrown down, take up the challenge! Right, now that I've got that out of my system, here comes point two.

If anyone can remember right the way back to Issue 23, a guy called Mark Ferry wrote in about the confusing situation with Euromax, the joystick company. He said that in an advertisement by the said company, they had warned people not to buy cheap imitations of their range with the words Zipstick on. Now then, after seeing a review of the Euromax Pro in ZZAP! by Julian Rignall, I decided to purchase it (after my faithful Quickshot II died after 3 years service). After having the stick for about four months I noticed that the micro switches weren't functioning properly, so I went back to The Virgin Games Centre (where I'd bought it) and got a new one. Well, after about three months this time the same thing happened. I took it back and told the guy about the letter in ZZAP! and pointed out to him that on the two joysticks I bought they both had Zipstick on, but he told me that they got the sticks directly from Euromax. On the box it had Zipstick Marketing anyway. I decided to get a new Quickshot II with micro switches and that has been working fine since I got it.

I don't know what Euromax are playing at and I don't know who the hell Zipstick are, but after my experiences I wouldn't like to buy one of their joysticks again.

Ah well, no one ever said life was gonna be easy! Still, until we meet some enchanted evening in the future I'll say keep up the good work Lloyd and Adios!

David J Washer, Wembley, Middlesex

I think loadagames are a great idea – it certainly seems to make games load faster! Did you know that the first one appeared on a Commodore game nearly four and a half years ago? It's a shame they aren't used more widely – I think Players and Mastertronic are the only ones to have games on their loading screens – and they're both budget companies!

LM

NO MORE 16-BIT

Dear Lloyd,
I have read and enjoyed ZZAP! since it first came out. I am surprised to find that a new computer has ventured into ZZAP! offices. The 16-bit (Amiga) I don't really mind, but why the extra 25p, anyway, ZZAP! 64 is a Commodore mag, so why the Amiga? Soon ZZAP! will be called something like ZZAP! Amiga and the old 64? Every issue the Amiga takes up more and more pages. I'm waiting to see if one issue will say that Commodore 64 does not exist anymore! The Amiga should have its own mag. So please Mr Rignall throw it out before it's too late . . .

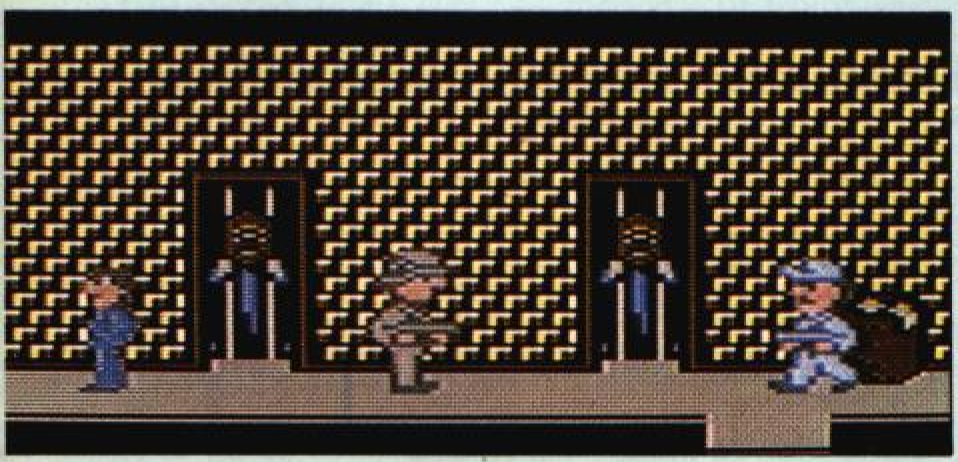
Although I'm twelve I'm sure that a lot of people will agree with me that ZZAP! 64 is and should be only, I repeat only a Commodore mag!

Mark Davies, Beaufort, South Wales

You say 'ZZAP! 64 should be only, I repeat only a Commodore mag'. I say the Amiga is, I repeat is a Commodore computer. Don't get so het up – I assure you that the Amiga section isn't going to get any larger than it currently is.

LM

And as the Sun sinks slowly over the horizon, I bring an end to this month's Rrap section. If you've got anything interesting to say, write in to LLOYD MANGRAM, ZZAP! RRAP, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB and you could well see your name in print.





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Once again the adventure section has been chopped to near non-existence, and this month there's room for only one review: Time And Magik. **However, we see the return of Examine All and the Vale Of Hope. The undead walk again in part two of the second serialised solution,** Dracula.



TIME AND MAGIK

Level Nine, £14.95 cass, £19.95 disk

Level Nine have been one of the best British adventure software houses since the heady days of *Colossal Cave* and *Adventure Quest*. Their range of games has brought acclaim to the Austins and have set a standard for other adventure publishers to follow. After a number of years when the family were happy to publish games under their own label, the Austins decided to team up with Rainbird, leaving the marketing and promotions to a company better suited to deal with these aspects of the business. *Silicon Dreams* and *Knight Orc* were released as a result of the partnership – nothing inspiring there. Recently Level Nine have moved on again and joined forces with a new company, Mandarin. The first product of this new merger is – in a similar vein to *Silicon Dreams* – an updated trilogy of Level Nine's past adventures. All their later games, including *Knight Orc*, *Gnome Ranger* and now *Time and Magik*, have been created using the teams new state-of-the-art adventure system, KAOS. This powerful utility features ramsave, undo, multi-tasking and data compression.

LORDS OF TIME

Whilst innocently looking at a picture in your living room, you find yourself thrown into a race against time. The old man depicted within the frame comes to life and explains that the Timelords are planning an evil future for mankind. You're charged with the task of travelling through nine time zones to seek out the ingredients required to make the formula with which to thwart the plot. All nine items have to be put in a cauldron which unfortunately is guarded by the Timelords.

Lords Of Time is an excellent adventure, consisting of many fine elements which add up to make a near perfect game. The ability to explore almost all the locations is a great asset and the puzzles and characters incorporated in the game are amusing, interesting and for the most part, logical.

RED MOON

This is the first Level Nine adventure to incorporate magik spells as a way of dealing with puzzles. The Red Moon Crystal has been stolen from the Moon Tower on the island of Baskalos – you must retrieve it. On your travels you find objects which act as amplifiers for magik – a dagger with which to attack enemies, a mushroom which decreases your size and so on.

Red Moon is too dedicated to the

magik content of the adventure and neglects the puzzle/problem elements. This makes for a shallow, although atmospheric game of simply moving through the locations discovering which spell best deals with particular obstacles.

THE PRICE OF MAGIK

The dreaded magician Myglar has been driven mad by the magikal radiance of the Red Moon Crystal. It's your task to defeat him and take his place as the guardian of the jewel before darkness enshrouds the Earth. You need to learn eighteen magik spells before tackling Myglar, and must do so without paying the price – your sanity.

You get involved in this battle to the death through the simple act of blowing up a balloon – you don't realise it's inscribed with a spell. On inflating, the balloon bursts and you eventually re-open your eyes to find yourself in a bleak landscape, outside the house of the Red Moon.

This is the worst game of the three. Again the emphasis is on spells and not game-depth. Wandering around bizarre locations performing magik hither and thither holds no attraction for me whatsoever. The game was abysmal when it was first released and the enhancements don't improve it much.

The digitised graphics on the updated games are well done and although adding little, they're enjoyable to look at. The text enhancements stick out as mere add-ons to the originals, but the many useful features such as the RAM save/load option and the OOPS command are a welcome development.

Time and Magik is good. Not all the components are particularly impressive – as usual the disk access time for graphics is a little slow – but the complete package should make a worthy addition to your collection – especially if you haven't played the games before.

ATMOSPHERE	64%
INTERACTION	79%
CHALLENGE	64%
OVERALL	68%

DRACULA
CRL

SERIALISED SOLUTION NUMBER TWO (PART TWO)

If you survived the terrors of part one relatively unscathed, it is now time to enter Castle Dracula and walk with the undead . . .

'The Arrival' opens with you hurtling along in a coach, seated opposite a strange female. Examine her eyes and you find yourself in a nightmare world from which you must quickly awake. The crucifix, which is the result of this dream confrontation, should be worn for protection. Eventually the coach stops and you get out to meet the second transport, which takes to the gates of Castle Dracula. Answer YES to the coachman's question and get on board. If you do not act quickly when in the coach, a cold death ends the game. Therefore, lift the seat and use the cross as a key to open the newly discovered door. Examine the hold to find a blanket to keep the cold at bay. When you alight from the coach go south and west. Look around to discover the steps and go up. Examine the door frame and feel inside the mouth of the bat. The door opens and you're taken to your room. Once there, examine the table to find a tray, go north and take the cloth. Polish the tray with it. You may now shave safely without cutting yourself and driving Drac mad with the sight of your blood. The wardrobe in your quarters may be entered and the rail lifted, this unlocks a secret stairway which is revealed by moving the wardrobe. The following events may be rushed through by continually inputting the REDESCRIBE command. After six or seven repeats, examining the table again reveals a bottle. Get it and break it.

On that note of vandalism I shall leave you until next month . . . if you survive that long.



EXAMINE ALL

After a short respite, Examine All returns amid a hail of letters. Most of the communication received concerns cries for help from those of you who've come to full stop in an adventure. If you're able to assist these frustrated folk, feel free to drop them a line. Perhaps one day you'll need help yourself.

Jason Keyse is having trouble crossing the ravine and dealing with the bear in CRL's *Frankenstein*. Try climbing the tree Jason, and waiting until the grizzly is very close before jumping to the ground. The weight of the animal should topple the tree – if it has climbed high enough – resulting in one dead bear and the creation of a bridge to the other side.

Master P Bainbridge of 47 Brickgarth, Easington Lane, Hetton-Le-Hole, Tyne and Wear, DHS 0LA can't get past Evil Lyn in the US Gold adventure, *Masters Of The Universe* and would dearly love help before he tells He-Man what he can do with his power.

Matthew Brandon from the land of Oz is perplexed by *Kentilla*. He'd like to know where he can find the golden key, the Conch shell and the damp moss, how to dry the latter and get passed the Karush in Grako's Tower. His address for would be rescuers is 42 Second avenue, Cheltenham 5014, 5th Australia, Australia.

Warren Melia of 1 Thornhill Avenue, Rishton, Blackburn, Lancs tells me there are a number of problems in *Guild Of Thieves* that he just can't solve. What can he use the lute and the words 'Urfanore Pendra' for? Can he open the safe in the castle gallery? How may he use the chewing gum and the anticube? What should he say to the gravedigger? How can he get into the bank of Kerovnia and how does he open the opaque case near the boathouse?

Robin Calull from Tonbridge is the first reader to write what one might call a real letter. Not merely pining for help, he actually has something to say – most refreshing. The subject of his letter is the lack of space awarded to the adventure column.

'Take last issue (36) where you stated, "Unfortunately space (or the lack of it) dictates that there is no Examine All or Vale of Hope". I was furious, I look forward to these particular articles and to find them not included made me unhappy.

I've been a ZZAP! reader for many years and have noticed that whenever there's a space shortage the adventure column is the first to suffer. I've put up with this as I thought the White Wizard was just too soft and easily bullied. I expected you, as a younger, more ambitious fighter to stand up to the editor and demand fair treatment for us adventurers.'

You will be pleased to hear, Robin, that I dangled Julian from the third story window of his office and demanded fair play . . . as a result, this issue sees the adventure column reduced to three pages again. Crossing Mr Rignall is a no-no, even for me.

It would be good to see more letters with some depth to them rather than the normal requests for help. If you feel strongly about some aspect of the adventuring world, write in and let me know.

VALE OF HOPE

Thanks for sending in your hints and tips for me to pass on to struggling comrades. The Vale of Hope has aided many a stumped adventurer (no that's not another name for a dwarf) and as long as you need help, you shall get it. Read on, and mayhap get yourself out of a sticky situation . . .

GUILD OF THIEVES (Magnetic Scrolls): Rub the horseshoe for luck. Use the jam jar to trap the flies in the stable and subsequently dispose of the spider in the Zoo hot-house.

REDHAWK (Melbourne House): Give the tube to Lesley. Wear the wellies before arresting Fusor. Give the vase to the museum curator.

IMAGINATION (Firebird): Play with the yo-yo at the pit. Aim the gun before firing it to score a bullseye.

QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL (Mastertronic): Wear the jester's hat to become invisible. Put the Grail on the pedestal in the castle throne room.

RIGEL'S REVENGE (Mastertronic): Give the bone to the dog before approaching the tank.

TIME AND MAGIK Part I (Mandarin): Before entering the tiger's cave, ensure you're armed with the spear and an open tin of cat food. Give the food to the tiger and pull his tooth.

KNIGHT ORC Part 1 (Rainbird): Throw the bucket (or a similar object) at the drawbridge then run in, get the chest and run out again. Tie your rope to the signposts at the clearing and wait for the hunter to come along. Examine the bar an the Inn to reveal a spear.

Clever Contacts

Welcome to the page dedicated to those poor souls lost in the depths of text, where friendly fellow adventurer's reach out and lend a helping hand . . .

Adventureland, Adventure Quest, Arrow of Death I, II, Ballyhoo, Blade of Blackpoole, Borrowed Time, Buckaroo Banzai, Castle of Terror, Circus, Colditz, Crystals of Carus, Cutthroats, Dallas Quest, Dungeon Adventure, Emerald Isle, Empire of Karn, Enchanter, Erik the Viking, Escape from Pulsar 7, Espionage Island, Eye of Bain, Feasibility Experiment, Forest at the Worlds End, Ghost Town, Golden Voyage, Gremlins, Gruds in Space, Hampstead, Heroes of Karn, Infidel, Invincible Island, Kayleth, Kentilla, Leather Goddesses, Lords of Time, Lucifers Realm, Magicians Ball, Magic Stone, Mask of the Sun, Mindshadow, Mission Asteroid, Moonmist, Mordon's Quest, Mystery Funhouse, Mystery of Munroe Manor, Ninja, Perseus and Andromeda, Pharaohs Tomb, Pirate Adventure, Planetfall, Pyramid of Doom, Rebel Planet, Red Moon, Return to Eden, Ring of Power, Robin of Sherwood, Savage Island I, Secret Mission, Ship of Doom, Sorceror, Sorceror of Claymorgue Castle, Souls of Darkon, Spellbreaker, Spiderman, Strange Odyssey, Tass Times, Ten Little Indians, The Count, Golden Baton, Hobbit, The Institute, Jewels of Babylon, The Journey, Never Ending Story, Pawn, Time Machine, Wizard and Princess, Quest of Merravid, Tower of Despair, Tracer Sanction, Twin Kingdom Valley, Ultima I, III & IV, Urban Upstart, Ulysses and the Golden Fleece, Valkyrie 17, Velnors Lair, Voodoo Castle, Warlords, Waxworks, Winter Wonderland, Wishbringer, Witches Cauldron, Wizard Akyrz, Wrath of Magra, Zork I, II & III, Zzzz . . .
Bob Shepherd, 106, Highfield Street, Coalville, Leicestershire

Heroes of Karn, Bored of the Rings, Gremlins, Voodoo Castle, Zim Zala Bim, Mugsy's Revenge, Tropical Adventure, Dracula, Holy Grail, The Pawn, Return to Oz, Masters of the Universe, Robin of Sherwood, Fourth Protocol, Price of Magik.
Christophe Brassart, 67 rue de l'Abbe Lemire, 59200 TOURCOING, France

Tower of Despair, Dracula, Adventureland, Zim Zala Bim, Castle of Terror, Time Tunnel, Eureka.
John Paterson, 8 Bracadale Road, Baillieston, Glasgow G69
Tel: 041 771 7729

Mordons Quest, Spiderman, Hacker
Nigel 'Nemesis' Richardson Tel: 01 360 8325

Zork I, II & III, Adventureland, Dangermouse in BFC, Earthbound, The Helm, Marie Celeste, Temple of Terror, Valkyrie 17, Temple of Vran, Mask of the Sun, Lords of Time, Dallas Quest, Infidel, Mystery Munroe Manor, Gremlins, Supergran, Planetfall, Ulysses, Blade of Blackpoole, Seastalker, Hitchikers, Ultima III, Search for King Solomons Mines, Skull Island, Murder on the Waterfront, Suspended, Cutthroats, Sorcerer, Enchanter, Ninja, Stranded, Hulk, Mindshadow, Lord of the Rings, Starcross, SubSunk, Worm in Paradise, Hampstead, Classic Adventure, Colossal Cave, Terrormolinos, Robin of Sherwood, Sherlock, Claymorgue Castle, Emerald Isle, Wizard of Akyrz, Return to Eden, Red Moon, Never-ending Story, Escape From Pulsar 7, Perseus and Andromeda, Golden Baton, Bored of the Rings, Empire of Karn, Ket 3, Feasibility Experiment, Lucifers Realm, Pilgrim, Secret Mission, Treasure Island, Wishbringer, Circus, Arrow of Death 1 & 2, Ten Little Indians, Ring of Power, Quest for Holy Grail, Kentilla.
Margot Stuckey, 14 Marampo St, Marayong, NSW 2148, Australia

Hulk, Spiderman, Voodoo Castle, Hobbit, Pirate Adventure, Merry Christmas, Robin of Sherwood, Price of Magik, Lord of the Rings.
Nigel Leather, 45 Moreton Street, Winnington, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 4DH Tel: 0606 781028

The Golden Baton, Worm in Paradise, Hobbit, Fourth Protocol (Pt 3 only).
Andrew Blackman, 133 Ashen Drive, Dartford, Kent DA1 3LY Tel: 0322 76887 5.30-8.30pm

Dungeon Adventure, Lord of the Rings, Quest for the Holy Grail, Hampstead, Lords of Time, Inca Curse, Espionage Island, Planet of Death
David Lemon, 14 Norton Place, Dunfermline, FIfe KY11 4RH Tel: 0383 728353 after 6pm Mon-Fri

Leather Goddesses of Phobos, Zork III, Terrormolinos, Never Ending Story, Heroes of Karn, Mission 1, Gremlins, Robin of Sherwood
Ron McKenzie, 3 Silverstream, Freystrop, Haverfordwest, Dyfed SA61 2SN

Adventureland, SubSunk, Heroes of Karn, Empire of Karn, Munroe Manor, Hacker, Classic Adventure, All early Infocom titles . . .
Chris Fleming, 235 Meola Road, Pt Chev, Auckland, N Zealand Tel: 867074

Voodoo Castle, Heroes of Karn, Pirate Adventure, Ten Little Indians, Hobbit, Lost City, Gremlins, Wizard of Akyrz, Quest for the Holy Grail, Zim Sala bim, Island Adventure, Castle Dracula.
Paul Flanagan, 6 Corry, Belleek, Co Fermanagh, N Ireland Tel: 036565 594

Upper Gumtree, Bugsy Malone, Never Ending Story.
Craig Hunter, 32 Lowick Close, Elmtree Farm, Stockton on Tees, Cleveland TS19 0TJ Tel: 0642 587789 (between 4pm and 10pm)

The Hobbit, Erik the Viking, Castle of Terror, Eureka, Voodoo Castle, The Count, Heroes of Karn, Empire of Karn, Zork I, Zork III, Exodus, Ultima III, The Boggit, Lords of Time, Never ending story, The Hulk, Temple of Terror, Ultima IV, Seabase Delta, Kentilla, Valkyrie 17, Sherlock, The fourth protocol, The Helm, Wizard of Akyrz, Perseus and Andromeda, Lord of the rings (part 1), Emerald Isle, Quest for the Holy Grail, Hacker, Colossal Cave.
Steven Kelly, 4 South View, Whins Lane, Simonstone, Burnley, Lancs BB12 7QU Tel: 0282 74765 (between 6pm and 10 pm)

The Hobbit, Seabase Delta, Kentilla, Zzzz, Spytrek, Robo City, Imagination, Demon Knight, Koboyashu Naru, Tower of Despair, Time Tunnel, Citadel of Chaos, Eureka, Sorceror of Claymorgue Castle.
Paul Hardy, 33 Fir Tree drive, Wales, Sheffield S31 8LZ

Hitchikers Guide, Zork I, Zork II, Planetfall, Leather Goddesses, Cutthroats, Infidel, Stationfall.
Dave Rogers, 15 Elm Terrace, Westfield, Radstock, Bath, Avon BA3 3XP

Amazon, Borrowed Time, Castle of Terror, Castle Adventure, Computer Adventure, Dracula part 1, Grand Larceny, Haunted House, Himalayan Adventure, Labyrinth, Mad Mummy, Mindshadow, Murder on the Waterfront, Never ending story, Ninja, Raka-tua Volcano, Scroll of Akhbar, Seabase Delta, Silver Mountain, Subsunk, The Boggit, The Dallas quest, The Hobbit, Ultima IV, Voodoo Castle, Zork I, Zork II, Zork III, Zzzz.
Mario Moeller, 38 Greenvale Drive, Greenvale, 3047, Vic, Australia

Ultima IV, The Bard's Tale, Voodoo Castle, Phantasie I, Never Ending Story, Dracula, The Prince of Magic, Borrowed Time, The Pawn, Seabase Delta, Deadline, Zork III, Wishbringer.
Derek Wong, 42 Ingram Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey, CR4 8EB

Hitchikers Guide, The Hobbit, Lord of the Rings, The Shadows of Mordor.
Warren Lee Melia, 1 Thornhill Avenue, Rishton, Blackburn, Lancs, BB1 4EZ

Castle of Terror, The Hobbit, The Hulk, Mindshadow, Holy Grail, Redhawk, Snowball, Subsunk, Twin Kingdom Valley, Voodoo Castle.
Jeff Gillan, 50 Tynedale Crescent, Penshaw, Houghton–Le–Spring, Tyne and Wear, DH4 7RP

Starcross, Suspended, Suspect, Leather Goddesses, Zork I, Zork II, Zork III, Deadline, Planetfall, Infidel, Cutthroats, Ballyhoo, Lurking Horror, Seastalker, Bureaucracy, Trinity, Moonmist, Hollywood Hijinx, Hitchikers Guide, Wishbringer, Sorcerer, Spellbreaker, Enchanter, The Pawn, Ultima I, Ultima III, Ultima IV, Sherlock, Gremlins, The Hulk, Terrormolinos, The Fourth Protocol, The Hobbit.
Billy Kavanagh, 49 Drake Hall, Westhoughton, Bolton, BL5 2RA

Never Ending Story, Zzzz, Quest for Holy Grail.
Tony Kinnear, 49 Wainwright Avenue, Hutton, Brentwood, Essex, CM13 2SZ
Imagination, Never Ending Story, Terrormolinos, Twin Kingdom Valley, Bugsy Malone, Hampstead, Robin of Sherwood, Zzzz, Quest of Merridavid, Upper Gumtree.
Craig Hunter, 32 Lowick Close, Elm Tree farm, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland, TS19 OTJ Tel: 0642 587789 Bally Hoo, Bored of the Rings, Borrowed Time, Deadline, Emerald Isle, Enchanter, Eureka (German, Arthurian, Roman), Gremlins, Hitchikers Guide to the Galaxy, The Hobbit, Leather Goddesses of Phobos, Mind Shadow, Munroe Manor, Moonmist, Pirate Adventure, Planetfall, Planet of Death, Knight Orc Pt 1, Seastalker, Ship of Doom, Spell Breaker, Spiderman, Starcross, Stationfall, Tass Times, Lurking Horror, Tracer Sanction, Valkyrie 17, Very big cave adventure, Wishbringer, Worm in Paradise, Zork I, Zork II, Zork III.
Ian Gay, 18 Earsdon Close, Westdenton, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE5 2RL

Zork I, Zork II, Zork III, Trinity, Pawn, Guild of Thieves, Knight Orc, Jinxter, Moonmist, Hollywood Hijinx, Cutthroats, Bureaucracy, Wishbringer, Red Moon, Worm in Paradise, Snowball, Return to Eden, Price of Magic, Macbeth Pts I, II, III, Kings Quest II, Adventure Quest, Colossal Adventure, Dungeon Adventure, Leather Goddesses of Phobos, Fourth Protocol, Lord of the Rings.
Bruce Marshall, 3 Mereside Avenue, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 4J2 Tel 0260 279786

WIN A POCKET COMPUTER!

THREE PSION ORGANISERS ON OFFER FROM EPYX

ALSO 10 RUNNERS-UP PRIZES OF IMPOSSIBLE MISSION II



It's not often that the sequel to a classic game is actually *better* than the original, but the Gold Medal awarded to *Impossible Mission II* has provided us with a brilliant exception to the rule. The same compelling combination of devious platform action and cunning puzzles has produced one of the best games this year.

To mark this momentous release, ZZAP! and Epyx have arranged a competition and prizes worthy of the game. On offer to a trio of triumphant readers are no less than THREE Psion CM Personal Organisers, worth £100 each. Having one of these portable databases means you'll always be organised: you can store masses of text, phone numbers, intimate details – anything you like (within reason). Be the envy of all your friends! Amaze and astound disorganised people everywhere! Be a person who knows where his towel is! Even if you don't win one of these fab first prizes, you could be one of the TEN fortunate firkins to receive a copy of the game.

You'll be pleased to know that what you need to do to win *isn't* impossible. Listening carefully? Good. The line of text below is an *answer* to which we want you to provide the *question*. Simple, eh? The wittiest and whackiest wesponses will be the winners, so don't just sit there – get cracking!

Elvin Atombender on a Saturday with a melon.

Write down your question on the back of a postcard (*no more than fifty words, please*) and send your entry to: **IMPOSSIBLE MISSION/ PSION ORGANISER COMPETITION, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB** to arrive before June 10. The quirky humorous taste of the judges is final.

MANOEUVRES

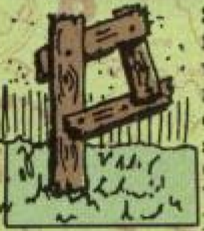
With Phillipa Irving

'Manoeuvres' comes to you this month on the tail-end of a great panic to get my Frontline Special in CRASH written on time, for I was simultaneously involved in putting on a production of 'The Gondoliers' at the specially re-opened Oxford Playhouse and gearing up 'Revenge of the Many-Legged Man Eating Mutant Tiger Hounds from Outer Space' for launch. Having desperately sat up late into the night typing my words of wisdom into a word processor, I managed to miss the train to Ludlow by about a minute. One of my friends who owns a car ended up driving me there to hand-deliver the copy, and driving me back in time for the evening's performance! All this excitement has receded with the end of term, and Oxford has become quiet and uneventful again. Uneventful, that is, except for the imminent opening of the Japanese Tourist Season . . .

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

SORCERER LORD

PSS, £14.99 disk



PSS is one of the few British software houses regularly producing strategy software for the Commodore. With such a large body of high-quality disk-based games available (admittedly, at prohibitive prices) from America in this area, British companies have a difficult job to compete in what is – sadly – a limited market over here. In America, they tell me, it's a different story: the average age of the game software buyer is higher, tape access is unknown, and thinking games outstrip the shoot 'em ups. Unfortunately for PSS, releases tend to have a slightly home-grown air in comparison, simply because they're levelled at a different market. It's ironic that British arcade games should be, on the whole, more sophisticated and interesting than those that come from America because these are the ones designed for the local mass market.

'Proper' fantasy wargaming is something that has only recently become widely popular in live gaming, and it's not at all common on the computer. For some reason, games designers seem to imagine that the buying public don't want conventional wargames with full fancy-dress fantasy backdrops. If dragons, orcs and wizards enter the picture, the game system plunges to the simplistic level, giving the player a chance to throw a few fireballs about and little else. Combat sequences in pseudo-roleplaying fantasy games are often extremely detailed and sophisticated, but there's a lack of straightforward cardboard counter army-manoeuvring wargames that happen to have legions of elves and chaos dwarves instead of German and Allied divisions. *Sorcerer Lord* is one of the rare attempts to do something of the sort.

It's set in the Lands of Galanor, three kingdoms of human races south of a deep and dark region of mystery known as the Shadowlands. For several millenia the Shadowlands, apart from playing host to a race of powerful and decadent sorcerers, have given their southern neighbours no trouble. But when a new Shadowlord comes to the throne, he's ambitious. He wants to march into Galanor, recapture the Rune Rings which his race enchanted when they ruled the whole land, and re-establish the Shadowland empire. So, in the best tradition of these things, he proceeds to gather an army of vile creatures conjured up by a kind of enchanted genetic engineering, and marches them southwards under the command of humans enslaved by the Shadowlord. Not unnaturally, the player takes the part of the upstanding clean-shaven men of Galanor. Fantasy wargames of any type never let you be the evil chaos hordes . . .

There are three difficulty levels to choose from, and the game gets under way without further preamble. The screen map bears a disquieting similarity to that of *Battlefield Germany*; disquieting, because it was distinguished by a hexagonal lack of atmosphere. Fortunately, in *Sorcerer Lord* this is remedied by the inclusion of a nicely-produced map printed on fake sepia paper. This clearly shows and names all the fortresses, and gives a good indication of the terrain. What appears on the screen is a rough and visually unattractive hexagonal approximation of this, although in terms of moving units about the countryside it's much more exact. My only complaint about the paper map is that it doesn't show the boundaries between the Shadowlands and Galanor and between the five nations of Galanor itself.



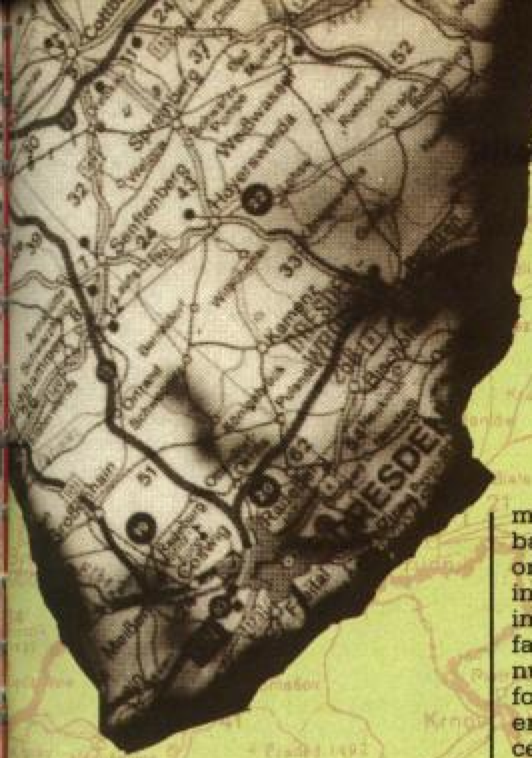
Liberating the forces of Galanor involves constant combat with the invading forces

The Shadowlord starts the game in possession of eight fortresses. The player is in control of large number of fortresses and several citadels, and all of the rune rings; but this does not mean that he has large forces immediately at his command. Despite being under the collective guidance of the Sorcerer Lord of the title, most of the leaders of Galanor have not realised the danger that their land is in, and it takes a few turns for them to become aware of it. Without leaders, troops cannot be moved. There are only three leaders awake at the start of the game, but in subsequent turns other leaders become aware and materialise for use at their own fortress. The only really efficient way to muster forces is to send the leaders already under your command on recruitment drives.

Armies are represented by units which contain warriors, riders and a leader. Information about each is displayed at the top of the screen, giving the name of the leader, including his race – which apparently has some effect on his ability to fight in certain terrain – the number of warrior and riders under his command, his leadership value, his sorcery ability, the general fighting ability of his troops and movement points available. It's impossible to do anything without a leader, and a leader, once killed in battle, is irreplacable. At the start of the game they're plentiful.

The rulebook gives some good imaginative backing to the various races that go to make up the player's forces. There are five races; elves, barbarians, mountain warriors, Men of Herdach (hardy northern types) and Men of Rovanium, the most southerly and the most civilised. Particular troops fight best under home conditions, so the Mountain Warriors of Morgalion are most proficient on the mountain ranges and the elves excel in woodlands. The types are distinguished on the screen map by the shield of their leader.

Certain aspects of this game may begin to sound familiar, and it's true that elements of the design seem to be borrowed directly from *Doomdark's Revenge*; particularly the need to increase your initial force by recruiting the help of friendly leaders, and the overriding importance of commanding officers if you want to do any-



thing at all with your troops. I have no quarrel with honest plagarism – a good idea is worth re-exploiting – but it's fair to warn the prospective purchaser who might be attracted on the strength of the similarity that *Sorcerer Lord*, absorbing though it is, has very little of the atmosphere of *Doomdark's*. This is almost entirely due, I'm afraid to the unattractive on-screen presentation.

There are five phases in each turn, starting with the Shadowlord movement. This opens the game and tends to induce an initial feeling of panic as the Shadow Legions move rapidly out from their strongholds and proceed to capture at least two of the player's castles before he has a chance to do anything about it. Being evil chaos spawn, the Shadow Legions can move at a greater rate and can cross mountain ranges and water with unfair ease. Shadowlord combat follows movement, in a separate phase. Each battle is resolved separately, though rather rapidly; much as in *Battlefield Germany*, although you don't have to press a key to move onto the next battle. Combat is initiated by moving a unit on top of an enemy unit, and is influenced by the leadership rating of the commander, the fatigue level of the troops, the numbers – obviously, though fortification makes a great difference – and whether or not sorcery is invoked.

The role played by sorcery is cleverly balanced. For a start, you may be in battle with a leader who has no sorcery ability at all, and the Shadow Legion commanders always have. But what matters more is which side controls the rune ring nearest to the battle, because if there's to be any sorcery at all, that side is able to use it to its own advantage. The nearer the battle is to the rune ring, and the greater the sorcery ability of the commander, the more powerful is the sorcery summoned. Sorcery ranges through five degrees from weak, which alters the weather conditions in the caster's favour (presumably it only rains on half the battle field) to devastating, which brings a host of demons to the caster's aid.

Exact casualties resulting from each battle are flashed onto the screen, rather to rapidly for comfort. If the defeated army is not entirely wiped out, it is forced to retreat to an adjacent position.

Between the enemy and the player's movement and combat phases is the Galanor Alliance phase, in which leaders around Galanor become alert to the danger and are available for use. Later, when all leaders have been prodded into awareness anyway, this phase becomes more important for the reinforcements it offers. Reinforcements are quite generous, and represent recruitment of troops from the countryside surrounding the fortresses. Unfortunately, it's often the case that 500 riders materialise in a stronghold miles from the main action and beyond the immediate reach of any leader.

The player's movement and combat phases follow. During the movement phase, if the player has a leader in a fortress he can be used to pick up any troops that may be there to increase his own army. He can also deposit troops, to be picked up later by other, perhaps more powerful, leaders. Movement is affected by terrain in the usual way, and in fact just about every geographical feature.

The gameplay centres around the taking and defending of fortresses, and rune rings to a lesser extent. If the Shadowlord holds any fortress or rune ring of Galanor for more than twelve turns the player is defeated – in theory. I must admit that in practice it didn't really seem to work like that. Galanor certainly falls if the citadel of Yarthos, deep in the south, is captured.

When I first played this game on the Spectrum, haunted by memories of *Battlefield Germany* and unsympathetic to its clumsy presentation, I was impatient with it and unable to enjoy it. However, meeting it again on the Commodore I found that I was able to get thoroughly embroiled in it. My second game, which totally absorbed me, lasted with only reluctant breaks for ten hours and had me, after a slow and struggling start, beating the chaos spawn back beyond the boundaries of their own land. This was on level one, and I didn't trust myself to start on another game at a higher level.

One aspect of the presentation infuriated me thoroughly. When, after having played for so long I achieved what I thought was a winning position and was preparing to attempt to invade the Shadowlands themselves, I was abruptly turned out of the game with no acknowledgement whatsoever. Not even a bland 'congratulations, you have defeated the evil menace of the Shadowlord'. This is unforgivable.

On the whole, though, I would recommend *Sorcerer Lord* as an exciting and eminently playable game that takes a little getting into.

PRESENTATION 65%
The packaging is good, but on-screen presentation is pretty dreadful for a game with professional pretensions.

GRAPHICS 61%
Not actually an impediment, but uninspiring.

RULES 80%
Play is well and systematically described and there's reasonable background material, although the illustrations look like they've been copied from an early Citadel miniatures catalogue.

PLAYABILITY 87%
Gripping.

OVERALL 85%
Highly recommended for the game, if not the aesthetics

TACTICS

This month's Tactics is dedicated to my own experiences of fighting back the Shadow Legions from the lands of Galanor in the world of *Sorcerer Lord*.

The opening Shadowlord's turn is likely to induce a feeling of panic as you see what appears to be impossible numbers of Shadow Legions pouring out from the Shadowlands against a handful of your own men. Don't worry. Remember, initial losses – probably of Throll and Olphid immediately – are inevitable. Also remember that the game is about defending fortresses, and fortified defenders have an absolutely massive advantage.

The first thing to do, after you've watched the initial onslaught in dismay, is to study the paper map and plan a strategy.

Without leaders you're powerless, so it's a priority on the first few turns to send every active leader to the nearest fortress. On the next turn, send him back to his own fortress to defend it and repeat the operation with the newly-activated leader. Never forget to recruit all possible troops from a fortress to the leader's personal army before you move him anywhere. Leaders who are awake at the start of the game tend to be on the front line, but the odd leader deeper into Galanor will probably become spontaneously active during early Alliance phases. It only takes a couple to rouse the whole continent, if you make it a priority, and it's less risky to do so quickly in regions where the Shadow Legions have not yet advanced.

Imryth is worth defending with care and concentration. Although Olphid will probably fall in the first turn, make a stand for Elvios and bring troops up from Sithrin. Recruitment is always greater at a citadel. The recapture of Olphid may have to be left until late in the game. If Elvios does fall, concentrate on Aldeth rather than Sithrin. It's a mistake to give up the minor fortresses as unimportant. The less fortresses that are under your control, the less opportunities you have to gain new recruits.

Start building up forces at Yarthros immediately. Engage the help of Mercunus and Roldon, and move all troops that appear there to Yarthros. It takes time for the Shadow Legions to get there, and by the time they do the numbers they meet ought to be formidable.

It's vitally important to retain control of the rune ring nearest to Yarthros, which is the one to the left behind the mountain range. To do this, build up defences at both Jaline and Ishterre and sit a large army on the rune ring itself.

Avoid fighting battles in the open. This is suicidal, for the Shadow Legions have their numbers more concentrated into single units. Avoid, in fact, all unnecessary fighting and concentrate on defence. The defender of a fortress has a great advantage over superior numbers, and six thousand men should be quite enough to hold Yarthros against any onslaught if you have control of the rune ring.

The battle in the north will inevitably concentrate on the defence of Oberdun, which tends to be self-supporting. Threskill, probably one of the earliest casualties, can be recaptured by a force moved gradually from Khalaz via Herlom and Shadra. Pavanda and Rharta ought to be seen as part of the effort to wear down the Shadow Legions before they get to Yarthros.

In my experience, trying to storm a Shadowlord fortress is a pointless exercise as the numbers defending it always regenerate automatically between turns. I have no idea whether it is in fact possible to reach the Shadowlord citadel and wipe out the menace forever . . . perhaps one of you could tell me.



After last month's giant-sized tips section, this one seems positively minute by comparison. Still, big surprises come in little packages (so it's said), and these slightly diminished tips pages contain plenty of useful POKEs, cheats and tips, as well as a brilliant Cybernoid map.

Well, what are you waiting for? Get reading . . .

ROLLING THUNDER (US Gold)

The next game under the hacker is US Gold's rather disappointing arcade conversion. Load the game, reset the computer and enter POKE 33570,173 (RETURN) **and then** SYS 32768 (RETURN) **to restart with unlimited lives. Thanks very much and greetings to Rebb from Alkmaan, Holland.**

HEROBOTIX (Rack-It)

I quite enjoyed playing this last month – it's not brilliant, but is certainly entertaining. If you're having problems getting anywhere, try out this quick POKE. Just load the game, reset the computer and enter POKE 33342,169 (RETURN) followed by SYS 29969 (RETURN). The game restarts with no sprite/sprite detection – good old Rebb!

SCOUT (MAD)

Yeah, Rebb's come up with a POKE to give you unlimited turbo wheelchairs! Load the game as usual, reset the computer and POKE 2486,1 (RETURN) **followed by** SYS 33216 (RETURN)**, and all those wheelchairs are yours. It's a shame a similar thing can't be cooked up for the NHS.**

THRUST (Firebird)

Yeah – MJ 'The Werewolf' Davies of Llandeilo, Dyfed has returned to the tips pages. Good to see you back, Mike. He's got a useful Thrust **listing that gives you unlimited lives, unlimited energy and stops the timer, so you can shoot the factory and escape without fear of blowing up! All you have to do is type in the listing,** RUN **it and follow the on-screen instructions.**

```
1 S=256
2 READ A:IF A>=0 THEN POKE S, A:S=S+1:GOTO 2
3 PRINT "THRUST HACK (C) M J DAVIES"
4 PRINT "PRESS SPACE TO LOAD AND RUN THRUST"
5 GET A$:IF A$<>CHR$(32) THEN 5
6 POKE 157,128:SYS 256
1000 DATA 169, 1170, 168, 32, 186, 255, 169, 0, 32, 189, 255, 32, 213, 255, 160, 2, 185, 27, 1
1001 DATA 153, 220, 2, 136, 16, 247, 96, 76, 33, 1, 169, 80, 162, 160, 2, 185, 30, 1, 153, 220, 2
1002 DATA 136, 16, 247, 160, 2, 185, 58, 1, 153, 125, 194, 136, 16, 247, 76, 220, 2, 76, 61, 1, 165
1003 DATA 173, 201, 194, 208, 3, 108, 172, 0, 160, 2, 185, 67, 1, 153, 125, 194, 136, 16, 247, 160
1004 DATA 2, 185, 95, 1, 153, 13, 4, 136, 16, 247, 76, 0, 4, 76, 101, 1, 160, 32, 185, 160, 2, 185
1005 DATA 98, 1, 153, 13, 4, 136, 16, 247, 160, 12, 185, 13, 4, 153, 123, 1, 136, 16, 247, 0, 0, 0
1006 DATA 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 169, 147, 133, 121, 169, 1, 133, 122, 76, 26, 4, 169, 0, 141
1007 DATA 239, 63, 141, 255, 63, 169, 165, 141, 174, 50, 169, 9, 141, 196, 64, 141, 251, 64, 141
1008 DATA 18, 52, 169, 1, 141, 197, 64, 141, 252, 64, 169, 234, 141, 198, 64, 141, 253, 64, 160
1009 DATA 13, 185, 201, 1, 153, 245, 101, 136, 16, 247, 76, 36, 108, 153, 153, 153, 32, 77, 46, 106
1010 DATA 46, 100, 97, 118, 105, 101, 115, 0, -1
```

IO (Firebird)

This very pretty horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up is a bit on the difficult side, so perhaps you'd might like to make use of these POKEs from Paul and Karl **from Sheffield. Just load the game and reset the computer so you can enter . . .**

POKE 25117,254 (RETURN) For infinite lives
POKE 24932,2 (RETURN)
POKE 24964,2 (RETURN) To start with all weapons

When you've made your changes, restart the action with SYS 24586 (RETURN)

ZYBEX (Zeppelin)

Right, here's a straightforward unlimited lives listing for this superb budget blaster. Type it in, RUN **it and press play on tape before loading the game, and the game loads and runs with infinite lives. Many thanks go to** R Troughton **of Keighley in Yorkshire.**

```
100 DATA 32, 86, 245, 169, 78
110 DATA 141, 200, 2, 169, 1
120 DATA 141, 201, 2, 96, 169
130 DATA 91, 141, 121, 4, 169
140 DATA 1, 141, 122, 4, 76
150 DATA 0, 4, 169, 189, 141
160 DATA 106, 113, 76, 0, 96
170 FOR L + 320 TO 354
180 READ A:POKE L,A:NEXT
190 POKE 157,128:SYS 320
```

4TH AND INCHES (US Gold)

Hut! Hut! Hut! Improve your American football skills by listening to coach Paul Ratje**, who plays for Newport in the Isle of Wight.**

Always choose champs, as overall they're the best. If you're receiving the ball from the kick off, use Rilly Quick to return it. If the ball lands in the End Zone, run directly under the post and you start from the 20 yard line. If you do this when the ball hasn't landed in the End Zone. You give away a safety (2 points). If you are kicking off the opposition usually run into trouble at the 20 yard line. If they don't you're pretty unlucky.

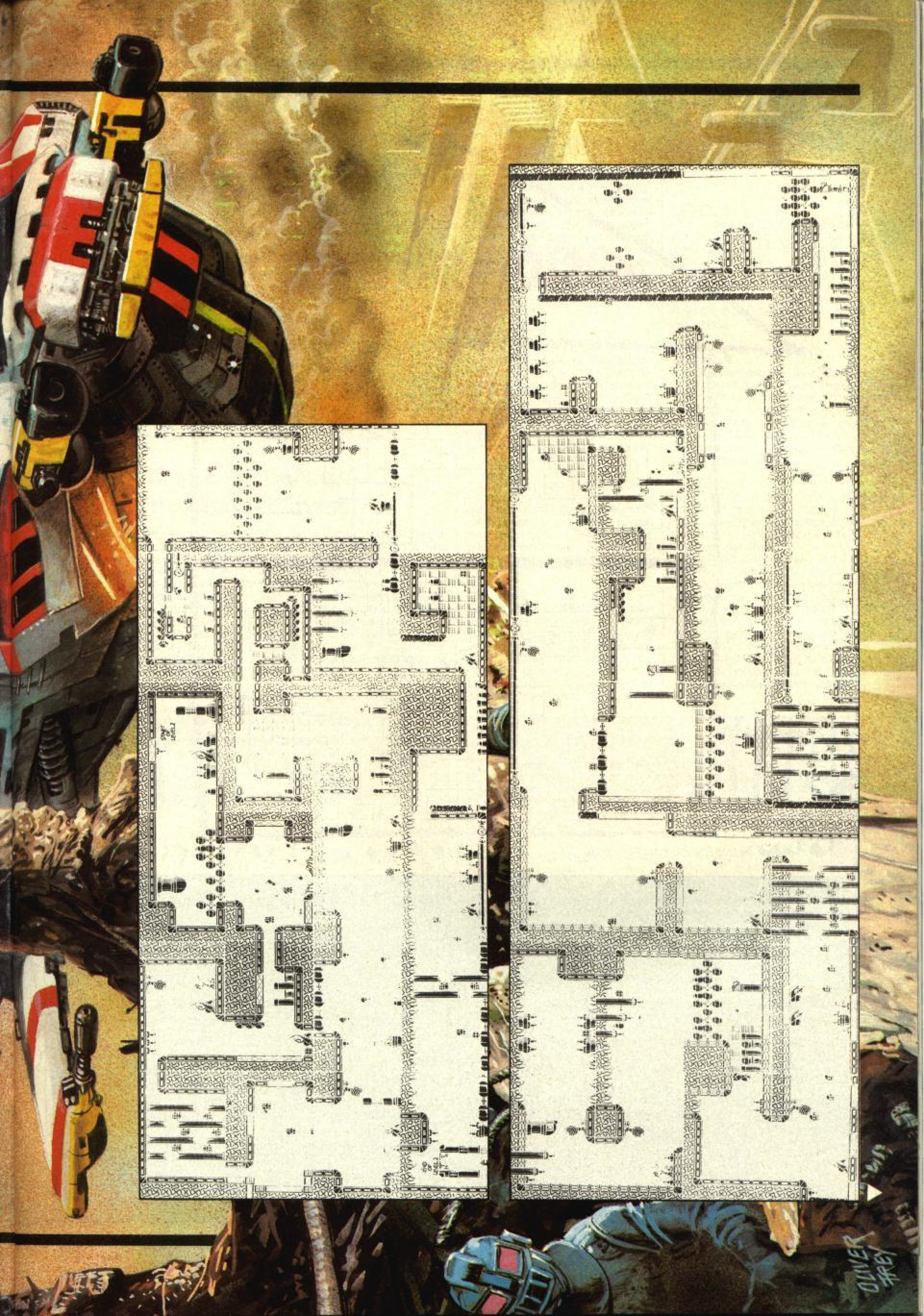
When you're attacking use the screen pass as much as possible. If you want to be really flashy and use long passes, go into any of the two shotgun moves and go back as far as possible. If any defender comes towards you manoeuvre into the best position possible and release the ball. If your man has a defender on him, he has no way of catching the ball and the pass is incomplete. If you're on the defensive, select any of the defensive plays (LF Dog is the best). Most of the time the computer does fairly long passes so select NICKEL and any of the safety positions.

As soon as the ball has been snapped, run right off the back of the screen, and whichever way the computer throws the ball, go that way. His intended receiver will be highlighted in dark blue (or black), so home in on him and follow every move he makes. You can either make him miss it or if you are in the right position, you might intercept it. If you do intercept it, run out along the touch line. Never try to go straight down the middle because half the opposing team is there!.

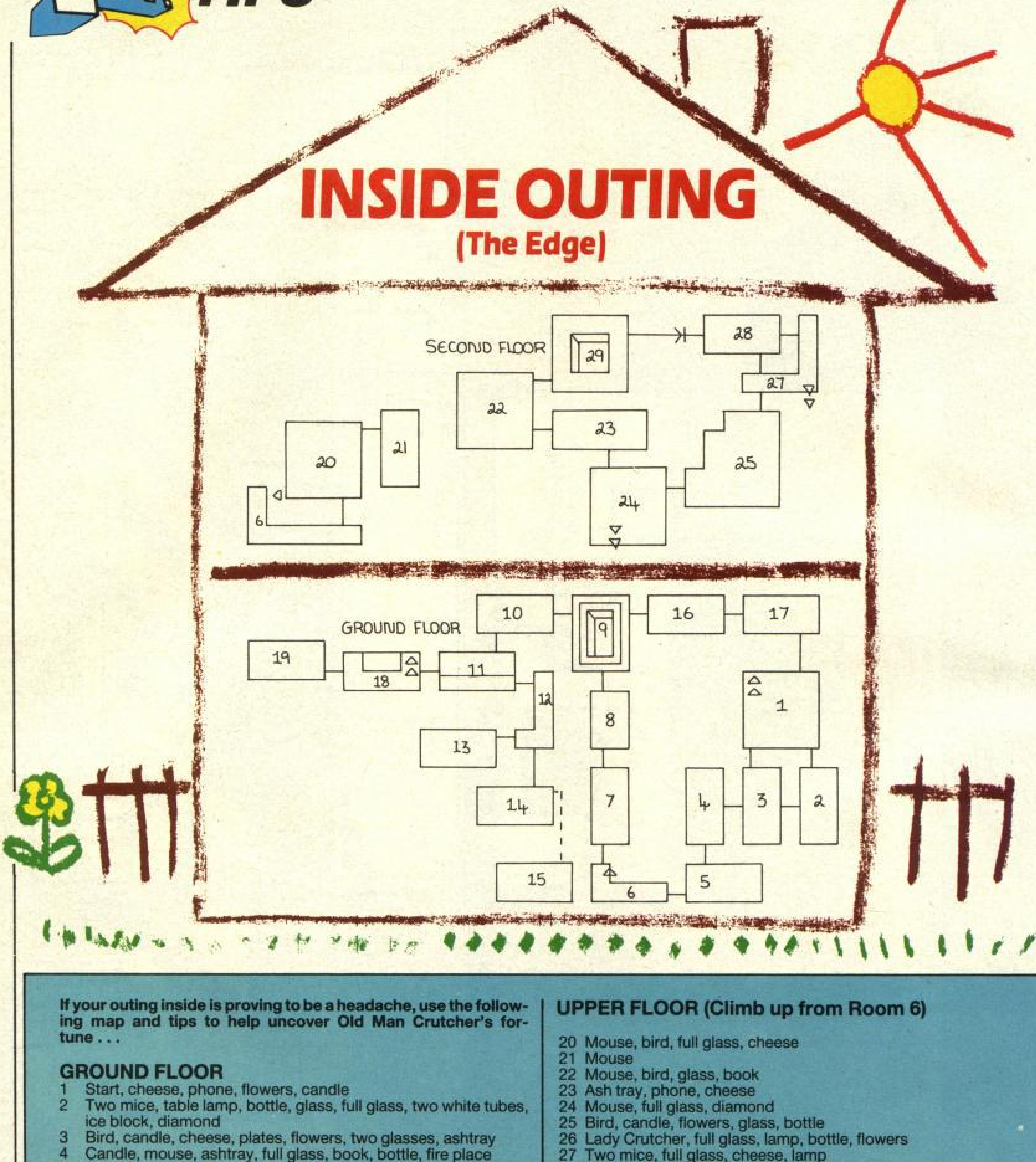
Keep Joe Dakota, Rilly Quick and Hugo Long throughout the game. Neither B Bigg or his replacement are particularly good, so change them around a bit. Never punt unless you're on 4th and 15 on your 5 yard line or something similar. Field Goals are useful when under 35 yards from the Endzone. Anything over 35 yards are very difficult to score. After selecting a play, never go to the coaches screen – you get a 5 yard penalty. When kicking, never use sideline or onside kicks, they don't go as far.

CYBERNOID




OLIVER FREY

INSIDE OUTING
(The Edge)



If your outing inside is proving to be a headache, use the following map and tips to help uncover Old Man Crutcher's fortune . . .

GROUND FLOOR
1 Start, cheese, phone, flowers, candle
2 Two mice, table lamp, bottle, glass, full glass, two white tubes, ice block, diamond
3 Bird, candle, cheese, plates, flowers, two glasses, ashtray
4 Candle, mouse, ashtray, full glass, book, bottle, fire place
5 Two cheeses, bottle, empty glass
6 Mouse, poisonous plant, full glass
7 Book
8 Cheese, flowers, full glass, bird, mouse
9 Bird, mouse
10 Full glass, diamond in safe behind picture, flowers
11 Two mice, phone, glass
12 Poisonous plants, bird, full glass
13 Mouse, bird (in far box), full glass, cheese, glass, ashtray, candle
14 Candle, fire place, flowers, lap, milk
15 Full glass, mouse, ash tray
16 Bud, poisonous plant, full glass, ashtray, bottle
17 Mouse, cheese, book
18 Flowers
19 Two birds, milk, diamond, full glass

UPPER FLOOR (Climb up from Room 6)
20 Mouse, bird, full glass, cheese
21 Mouse
22 Mouse, bird, glass, book
23 Ash tray, phone, cheese
24 Mouse, full glass, diamond
25 Bird, candle, flowers, glass, bottle
26 Lady Crutcher, full glass, lamp, bottle, flowers
27 Two mice, full glass, cheese, lamp
28 Book, ash tray, candle

TIPS
To climb Room 6, take cheese to room, drop it and go back out. Do the same thing with with phone and flowers. Wait until the mouse touches the cheese. Set this up under the hole in the ceiling, and you should get through. If you're still having problems, use the ashtray too.

CLIMBING TECHNIQUES
The phone is useful, as it's large, and gives good balance. The flowers are the highest item, and are good for climbing. Note: the cheese 'freezes' mice, but how do you stop birds? Full glasses replenish energy, but if it is drunk when energy is high, you lose lots.

PAC-LAND (Grand Slam)

How about some unlimited PacMen to help you conquer this cute arcade conversion. Just type in R Troughton**'s listing, insert a rewound** Pac-Land **cassette into the C2N and type** RUN (RETURN)**, and the game loads and runs with unlimited Pacs.**

```
100 DATA 169, 207, 141, 41, 3, 32, 86, 245, 169, 32,
141, 187, 3, 169, 240
110 DATA 141, 188, 3, 169, 2, 141, 189, 3, 160, 15,
185, 222, 207, 153
120 DATA 240, 2, 136, 16, 247, 96, 238, 32, 208, 238,
33, 208, 169, 189
130 DATA 141, 162, 9, 252, 0, 0, 96, 169, 49, 141, 159,
2, 169, 234, 141
140 DATA 160, 2, 76, 237, 246
150 FOR L=53179 TO 53241:READ A:POKE
L,A:NEXT:SYS 53179
```

SKATE OR DIE (Electronic Arts)

Did you know that there's a secret passage on the downhill jam. Well, Flagger **from Melbourne in Australia has discovered it! After the first wire fence, there's a large white building on the left that most players would try and avoid. Instead, go as far left as possible while staying on the path, and instead of crashing into it, you go under it and come out the other end! Brill!**

TANIUM (Players)

This is another very difficult horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up – but again, nothing a good old POKE can't solve. This time, Hayden 'Dolly' Dalton **from Oldham in Lancashire has come up with the goods. Just load the game, reset the computer and type** POKE 52255,174 (RETURN) **and** SYS 16384 (RETURN) **to restart with an infinite supply of spaceships.**

SKATE OR DIE (Electronic Arts)

Fancy remixing that excellent Rob Hubbard title tune? Well, just load the game and reset the computer when the title screen appears. Type in this listing from Strike Force **of the Android Cracking Association . . .**

```
20 FOR N+1 TO 20:T+49152 TO T+20:READ
B:POKE T,B:NEXT T:NEXT N:END
30 DATA 169, 147, 32, 210, 255, 169, 0, 141, 17, 208,
141
40 DATA 32, 208, 41, 33, 208, 76, 22, 64, 96
```

Now RUN **the listing, and an** OUT OF DATA **error message pops up. Don't worry about it, just type** SYS 49152 (RETURN) **and listen to a new version of the title track.**

BRAVESTARR (GO!)

Those of you who were unfortunate enough to buy this heap of rubbish (why didn't you wait for the ZZAP! review) might find these Rebb **POKEs useful. Load the game, reset the computer, type** POKE 14500,173 (RETURN) **and** SYS 7236 (RETURN) **and unlimited time is yours. Whoopee.**

SCUMBALL (Mastertronic)

Do you want to get a little further in this Starquake**-style arcade adventure. You do? Oh good, use this** Rebb **POKE, and you shouldn't have any trouble completing the game. Load the game, reset the computer and enter** POKE 13081,173 (RETURN) **followed by** SYS 2064 (RETURN) **for unlimited lives.**

TARGET RENEGADE (Ocean)

Jon Hopwood **and** Steven Baker **of Maidenhead have been fumping 'n' fighting all manner of strange characters in Ocean's latest sequel, and have managed to get all the way through to the end, where one of the greatest ever end-game sequences awaits. If you want to see it too, just follow these highly useful tips . . .**

LEVEL 1

This level is set in a multistorey car park which consists of four floors. Firstly you must walk to the right, which requires that you dismount the bikers using a flying kick. Once you've kicked them off their bikes they'll proceed to attack you with fists and a club. The rider takes five hits to destroy, whereas the others take two hits. Use the club to your advantage.

On floors 2 and 3 you can continually scroll from right to left without being attacked. Use this method when on floor 4 you're only required to defeat one biker and one man before answering the phone.

LEVEL 2

Here you're attacked by a prostitute and a pimp with a walking stick and a gun (which fires six bullets only). Firstly attack the woman and dispell her with three punches. After the pimp's bullets run out, move into the man diagonally and do him over with three duck punches.

LEVEL 3

Now come a pair of horrible skinheads, a large one (who requires five hits) and a small one (with a rather nasty hand but who requires six hits). Always attack the right hand man first, and you shouldn't have too much trouble in reaching the phone at the end of the screen.

LEVEL 4

The Beastie Boys and their faithful dogs need to be removed quickly. The men take six hits and the dogs require three duck punches before they shuffle off this mortal coil. Warning! Watch the time as you go since this is normally the key factor rather than lives.

LEVEL 5

Now eight bodyguards (two onscreen at one time) attack you. Each are defeated using eight punches (a combination of high and duck punches).

Finally Mr Big arrives, and he requires 14 high punches to defeat him. Warning! Keep your distance otherwise he will reach out his massive arm and throttle you! As long as you keep your distance and keep punching, you shouldn't have too much trouble in despatching him. When he's been knocked unconscious, sit back and enjoy that fabulous end sequence.

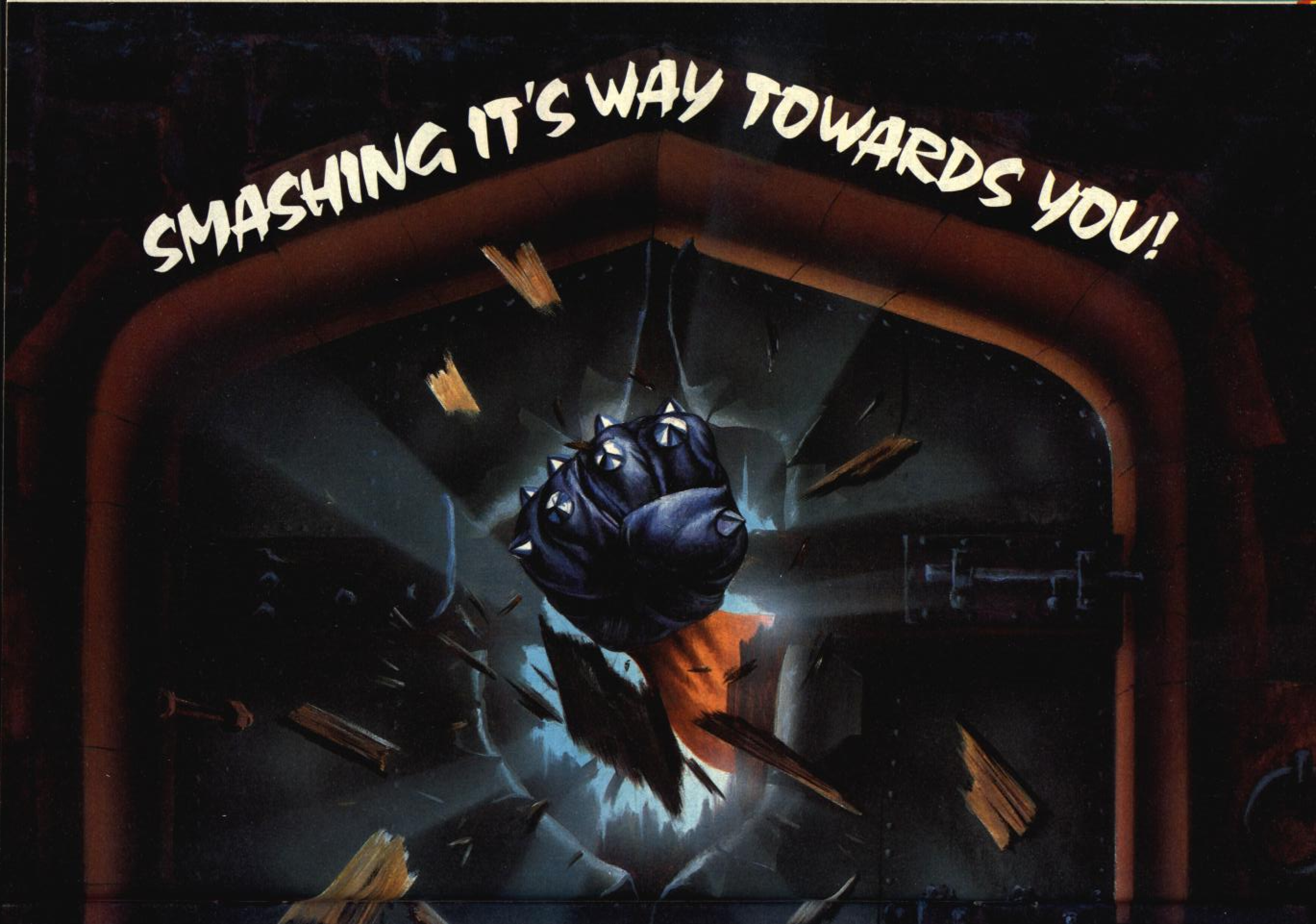
STORM (Mastertronic)

If you want to score zillions of points on this tepid Gauntlet **clone, try out** Mike 'The Werewolf' Davies**' listing to become mega-hard. First of all type in and** RUN **the listing before pressing play on tape.**

```
0 IF C=1 THEN POKE 689,76:POKE 690,63:POKE
691,1:END
1 DATA 160, 2, 185, 177, 1, 153, 86, 140, 136, 16, 247,
76, 0, 140
2 DATA 76, 80, 1, 169, 55, 133, 1, 32, 138, 255, 32, 91,
255, 76, 148, 227, -1
3 A=319:C=1:POKE 157,128
4 READ B:IF B>=0THEN POKE A,B:A=A+1:GOTO 4
5 LOAD"",1,1
```

The program loads, and the computer resets, allowing you to type POKE 32846,96 (RETURN) **and** SYS 30124 (RETURN) **to restart the game with infinite energy for both players.**

That's yer lot I'm afraid. Rebb gets this month's £30 software voucher for his excellent series of POKEs. If you have anything of value to add to this tips section – be they tips, maps, POKEs, hints, cheats or whatever – send them in to **Julian Rignall, ZZAP! TIPS, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB** and if they're good, you could well see them in print. If you're really lucky, you could find a £30 software voucher dropping onto your doormat . . .


SMASHING IT'S WAY TOWARDS YOU!

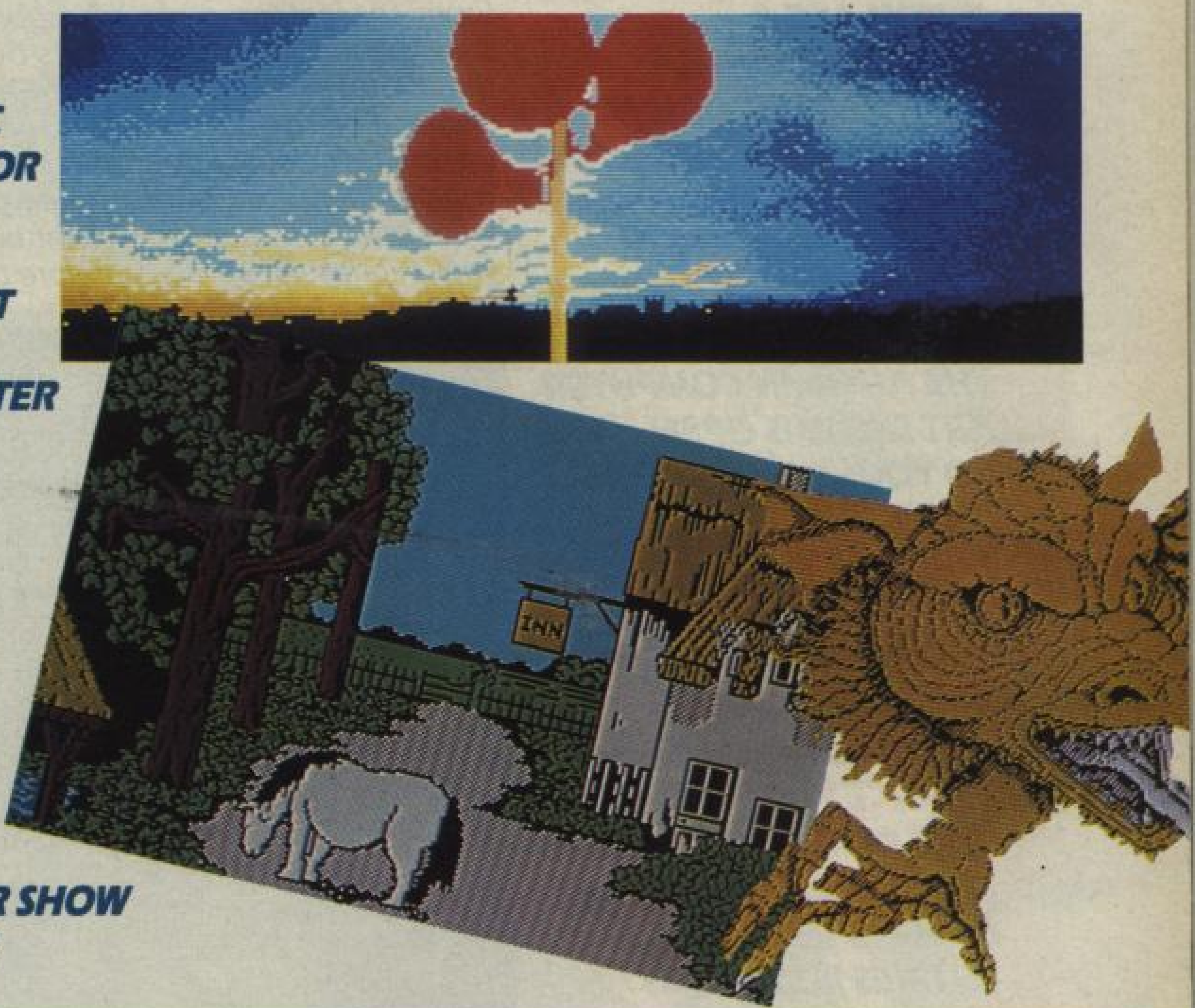

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I would like my computer art to be considered for entry Newsfield's Autumn Computer Art Exhibition at the PC Show, Earls Court.

Name ....

Address ....

....

.... Postcode ....

Phone Number ....

☐ I am over 18

☐ I am under 18, and my legal guardian has signed below

I have read the conditions of entry printed overleaf and agree to abide by them

Entrant's signature (or legal guardian) ....

Number of pieces submitted and computer:

☐ 1 machine: .... ☐ 2 machine: .... ☐ 3 machine: ....

Please state the titles of your submitted pieces (delete disk/cass as inapplicable), followed by the FILENAME and Utility used. Any special instructions for loading or use of self-designed utilities should be written out on a separate sheet.

Title 1: (disk/cass) .... Filename: .... Utility: ....

Title 2: (disk/cass) .... Filename: .... Utility: ....

Title 3: (disk/cass) .... Filename: .... Utility: ....

☐ I have enclosed a stamped addressed envelope for the return of disk/cassette

☐ I enclose extra payment for return package to be sent recorded/registered

Please ensure the form is correctly filled out, that your cassettes/disks are all labelled correctly as per instructions on the reverse of this form, and that you have signed the form. Then send it, together with any separate enclosures, disk(s) or cassette(s) to:

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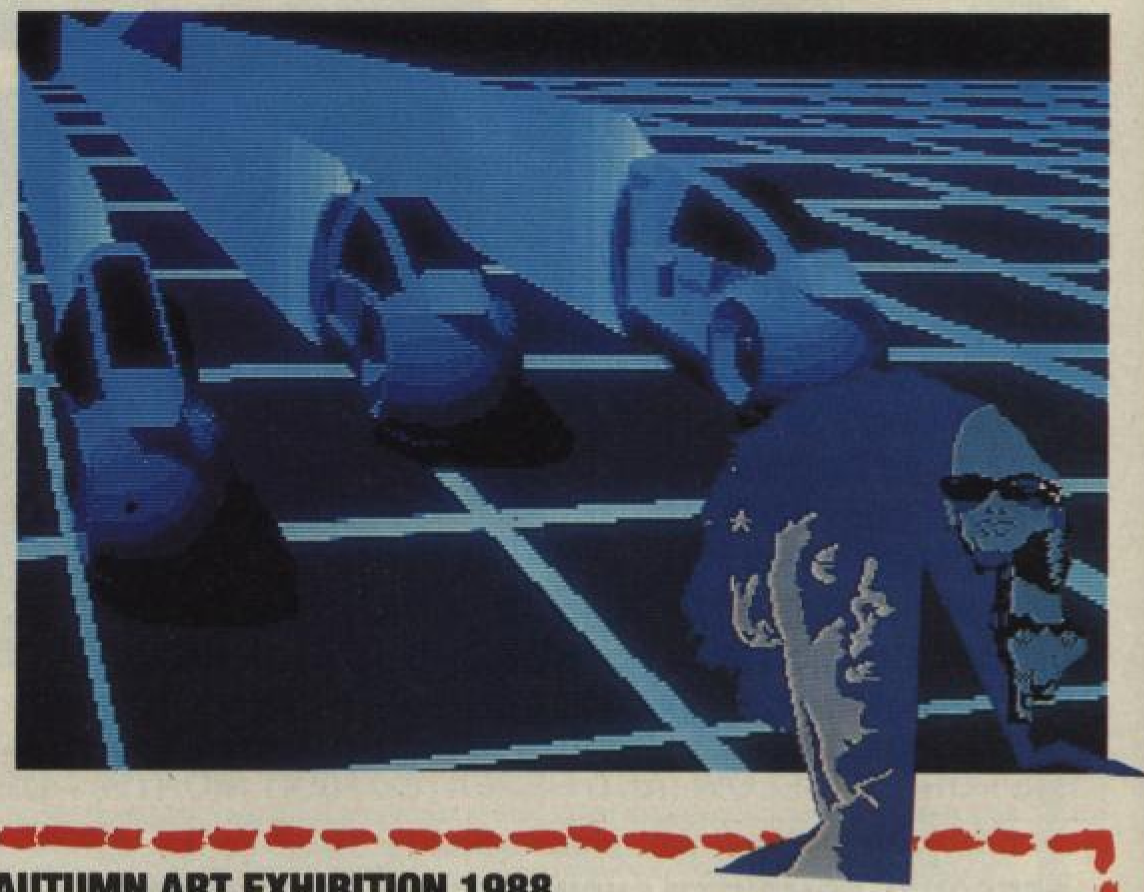
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From the entries received, approximately 30 works of art will be selected across all the formats by a panel of experts for exhibition at the 1988 Personal Computer Show at Earls Court. There, between September 16-18, over 60,000 people will visit the show and see your work if it is selected. And added to that thrill you will be able to sell your work to the public and there are prizes for the top entrants. So get to work now, read the small print below very carefully, please, and get your submissions in to us before the closing date.



PERSONAL COMPUTER SHOW AUTUMN ART EXHIBITION 1988

CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

1 The Personal Computer Show Exhibition sponsored and organised by Newsfield Publications is open to professionals and amateurs. The Professional Category includes persons who earn a living from designing computer-generated graphics for art purposes, television, advertisements, games or any form of commercial display.

2 All entrants must be over 18, or if under 18, must have the consent of their legal guardian and their entry form signed by their legal guardian.

3 Submitting work for the exhibition and returning a signed copy of the entry form will be deemed as acceptance of all of these conditions of entry contained herein.

4 Any art/graphics utility, whether commercially available or specially devised, may be used. But all submitted works must be static – animations will not be acceptable.

5 All work must be submitted on a suitable disk or cassette tape. In the event of a failure to load, entrants will be contacted and requested for a replacement. Where supplied data can only be loaded within a commercially available utility program, the utility used must be stipulated on the entry form at the appropriate point. Where non-available utilities have been used (such as self-devised programs), entries will not be accepted unless also accompanied by suitable loading programs and detailed instructions on their use.

6 Submitted work may not have been used before for any commercial processes, nor have appeared in printed form in any publication, nor be allowed to appear in printed form in any publication until after September 18 1988 without the prior consent of the Exhibition organisers.

7 Submitted work must, in the view of the judges, be original and not merely copies of existing media images, commensurate with artistic freedom to draw on ready-made images for inspiration.

8 All program data entered for consideration must run on one of the following computers: Spectrum 48K, Spectrum 128K (+2 and 3), Amstrad CPC 664/6128, Commodore 64/128, IBM PC, Atari ST, Amiga (any model). Works running on other machines will not be accepted.

9 The judges will consider submitted work within the context of each computer's capabilities and make every possible attempt to see that the final exhibition reflects the ranges of machines encompassed in point 8 above.

10 Entrants may submit up to a maximum of three works each. All cassettes and disks must be labelled clearly with the entrant's name, address and titles of works contained therein.

11 The final selection of works to be exhibited, and those chosen as prizewinners, will be at the sole discretion of the judges, and no correspondence may be entered into on this matter. Acceptances and rejections will be notified to all entrants by September 8 latest.

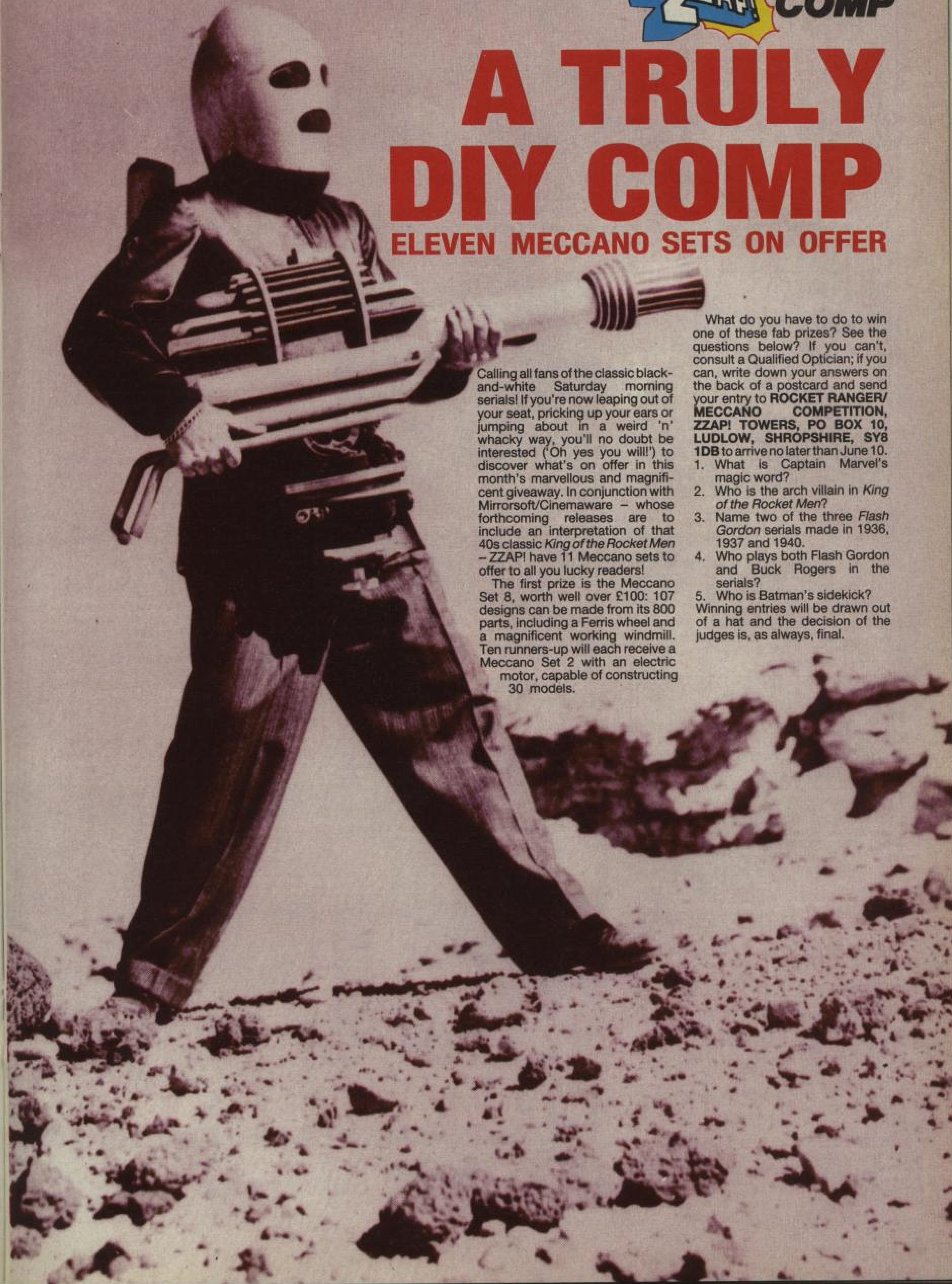
12 The organisers cannot be held responsible for the safe arrival of disks/cassettes. You are advised to despatch data by either registered post or recorded delivery and mark the packaging clearly as containing "MAGNETIC MEDIA". Disks/cassettes will only be returned if the entry form is accompanied by a suitably stamped addressed envelope. If you wish return to be by recorded delivery, then extra payment to cover the cost must be included.

13 Any submitted work carries an acceptance of first publishing rights free of charge in Newsfield Publications magazines. Exhibitors' work will be made available for sale to the public at the Personal Computer Show in suitably printed form on an order basis, either framed or unframed (prices at the discretion of the organisers). Receipts of sales less a 20% commission will be the property of the artist.

14 All exhibitors will be provided with free entry to the Personal Computer Show on the public days (September 16-18). Though not a condition, it is desirable that exhibitors should be available for any attendant public relations exposure of the exhibition either before, during or after the show.

A TRULY DIY COMP

ELEVEN MECCANO SETS ON OFFER



Calling all fans of the classic black-and-white Saturday morning serials! If you're now leaping out of your seat, pricking up your ears or jumping about in a weird 'n' whacky way, you'll no doubt be interested ('Oh yes you will!') to discover what's on offer in this month's marvellous and magnificent giveaway. In conjunction with Mirrorsoft/Cinemaware – whose forthcoming releases are to include an interpretation of that 40s classic *King of the Rocket Men* – ZZAP! have 11 Meccano sets to offer to all you lucky readers!

The first prize is the Meccano Set 8, worth well over £100: 107 designs can be made from its 800 parts, including a Ferris wheel and a magnificent working windmill. Ten runners-up will each receive a Meccano Set 2 with an electric motor, capable of constructing 30 models.

What do you have to do to win one of these fab prizes? See the questions below? If you can't, consult a Qualified Optician; if you can, write down your answers on the back of a postcard and send your entry to **ROCKET RANGER/ MECCANO COMPETITION, ZZAP! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB** to arrive no later than June 10.

1. What is Captain Marvel's magic word?
2. Who is the arch villain in *King of the Rocket Men*?
3. Name two of the three *Flash Gordon* serials made in 1936, 1937 and 1940.
4. Who plays both Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers in the serials?
5. Who is Batman's sidekick?

Winning entries will be drawn out of a hat and the decision of the judges is, as always, final.

...Another CRUCIAL COMPILATION COMPARISON

Old games never die – they either get re-released at budget price, or appear on a compilation tape! Julian Rignall rounds up the latest assemblages and gives judgement.

There's little point in rating the Graphics and Sound of a compilation as a whole – so, taking into consideration the quality of the packaging and instructions – and of course the games, a cross between a Presentation, Hookability, Lastability and Value rating is provided in the form of an Overall percentage and comment.

6-PAK VOLUME III

Elite, £9.99 double cassette pack, £14.99 disk

Contents:
ENDURO RACER – utterly ghastly race game conversion inept in every sense of the word
DRAGON'S LAIR – very difficult and repetitive six-screen raster rendition of the arcade game
ESCAPE FROM SINGE'S CASTLE – a polished, challenging and enjoyable sequel to *Dragon's Lair*
PAPERBOY – a bland conversion of the Atari coin-op with awful graphics and 'feel'
THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS – dull film tie-in with very little going for it
GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS – an excellent arcade conversion which has stood the test of time

OVERALL 59%
A varied package which offers a couple of good games and four bad ones. The best of the bunch, *Ghosts 'n' Goblins*, is available on several other compilations.

10 GREAT GAMES II

Gremlin Graphics, £9.99 double cassette pack

Contents:
REBOUNDER – sizzling sequel to *Bounder* with ace graphics and gameplay to match
THING BOUNCES BACK – another sequel, again playable and addictive
DEATHWISH III – plenty of violent shooting action, but ultimately tedious
BASIL THE GREAT MOUSE DETECTIVE – a straightforward platform and ladders adventure featuring Disney's latest cartoon character
JACK THE NIPPER II – an addictive arcade adventure very much in the *Future Knight* mould
CONVOY RAIDER – very tiresome shipping action which is best avoided
SAMURAI TRILOGY – dire fighting game crippled by bad graphics and awful gameplay
MASK – average multidirectionally scrolling blaster
BULLDOG – simple but reasonably compelling shoot 'em up
AUF WEIDERSEHEN MONTY – archaic platform/collection game

OVERALL 86%
All titles are relatively new, and although one or two are poor, the overall package offers plenty of potential entertainment. Definitely one to look out for.



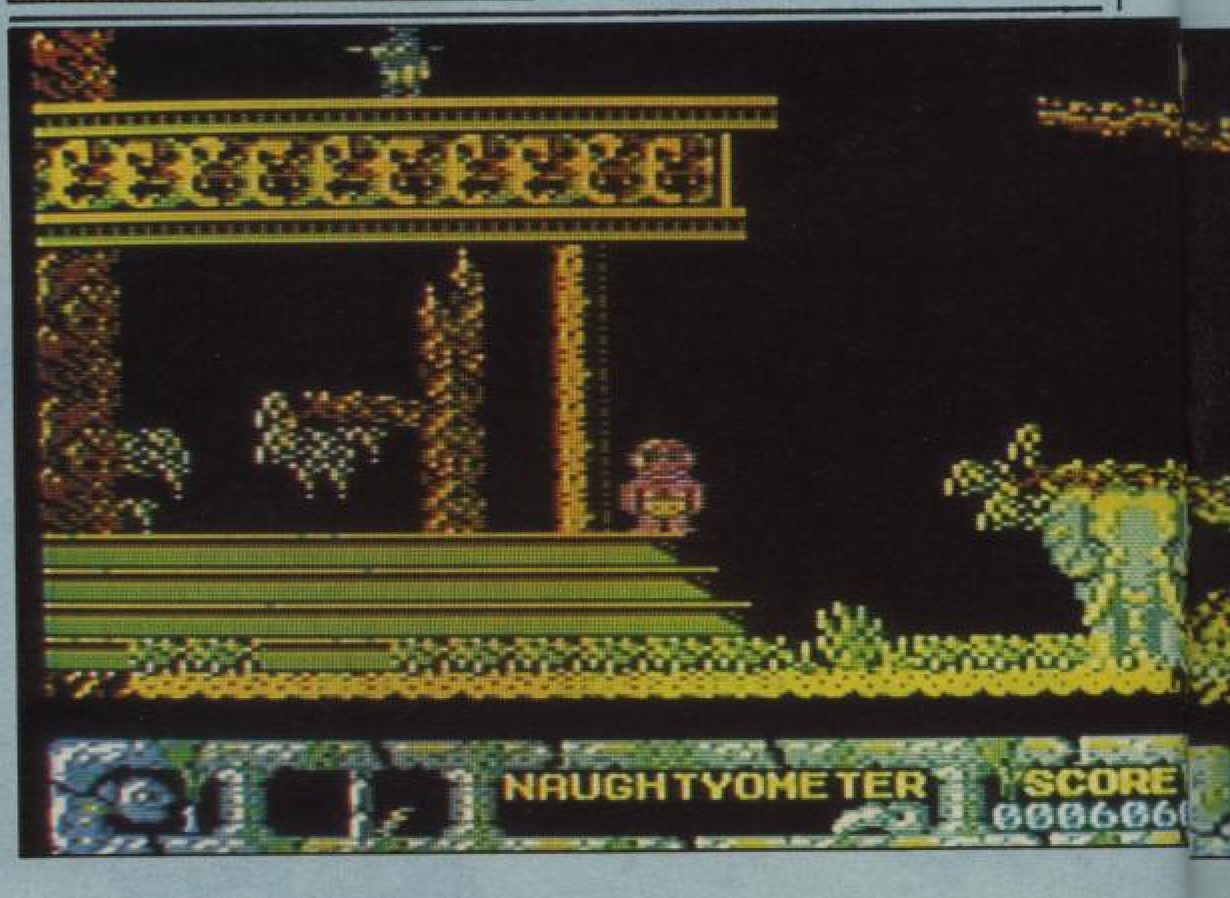


TOP TEN COLLECTION

Elite, £9.99 quintet cassette pack

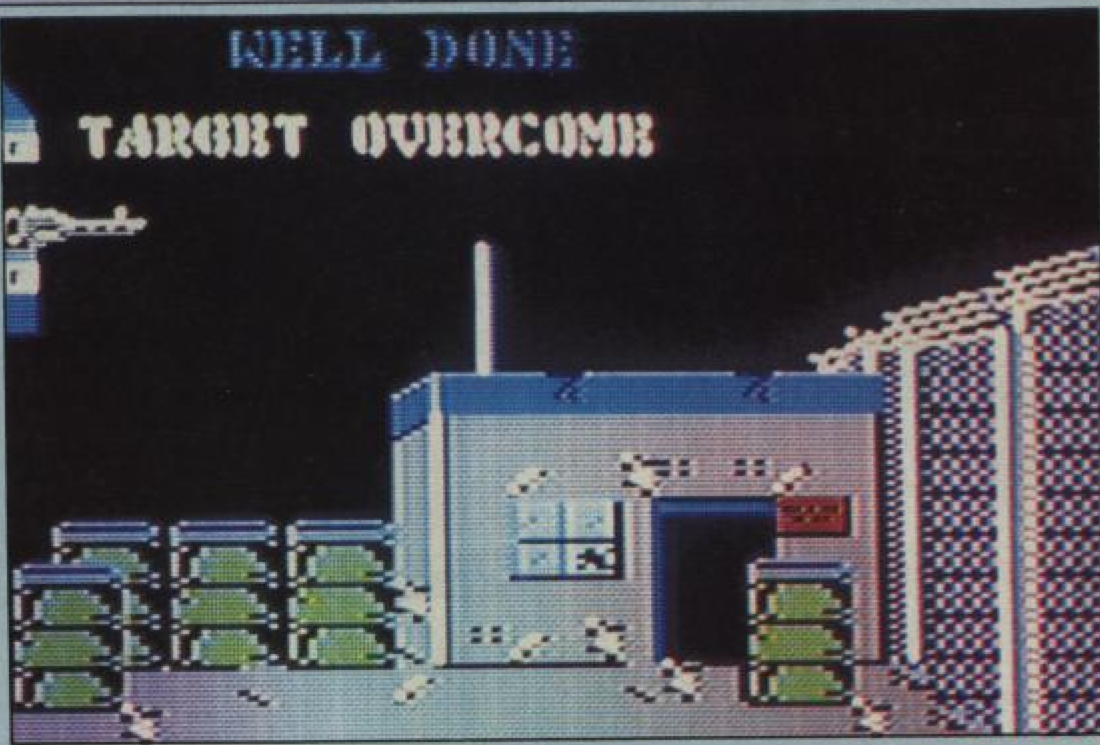
Contents:
SABOTEUR – average flick screen arcade adventure marred by poor sound effects and graphics
SABOTEUR II – a bigger playing area, but otherwise very similar to its predecessor
SIGMA SEVEN – good looking, but repetitive three-level shoot 'em up
CRITICAL MASS – a plain multidirectionally scrolling shoot 'em up with limited appeal
AIRWOLF – reasonable exploration game which is showing its age
DEEP STRIKE – a dull wartime shoot 'em up which looks and plays like a Spectrum game
COMBAT LYNX – decrepit helicopter simulation which never gets of the ground
TURBO ESPRIT – half-baked conversion of the Spectrum game with about as much go as a C5
THANATOS – a nice idea ruined by slow gameplay and bland graphics
BOMBJACK II – highly enjoyable platform/collecting romp

OVERALL 53%
Plenty to get your teeth into, but most of the games are very unappetising and leave a sour taste in the mouth.



KONAMI ARCADE COLLECTION

Imagine, £9.95 double cassette pack



Contents:

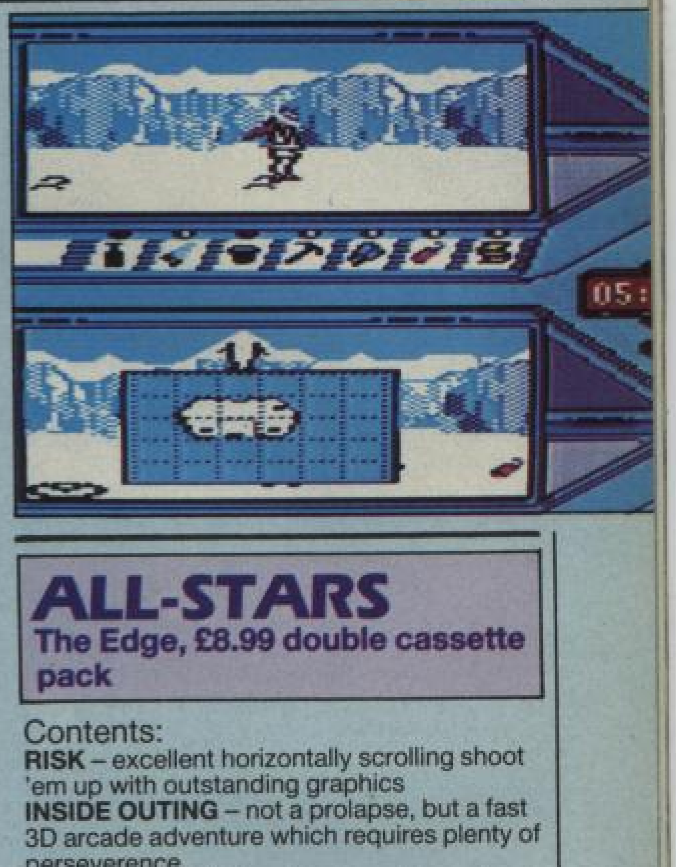
MIKIE – fairly good conversion of the flaccid coin-op
JAIL BREAK – laughably bad conversion boasting horrid graphics, terrible collision detection and rubbish gameplay
GREEN BERET – excellent conversion of the stab 'n' roast arcade game
YIE AR KUNG-FU II – whacky fighting action that proves mildly addictive
SHAO-LIN'S ROAD – very dull platform-cum-fighting game
NEMESIS – fast and frenetic horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up
HYPER SPORTS – enjoyable joystick waggling version of the ageing arcade game
PING PONG – playable, but limited 3D pong
IRON HORSE – fairly average conversion of the obscure arcade machine
YIE AR KUNG-FU – very similar to its arcade counterpart, but suffering from advanced years

OVERALL 82%
No new or outstanding titles, but a solid compilation nonetheless. The majority of the games are playable and offer at least a few hour's entertainment apiece.

SPY VS SPY TRILOGY

Databyte, £9.95 double cassette pack

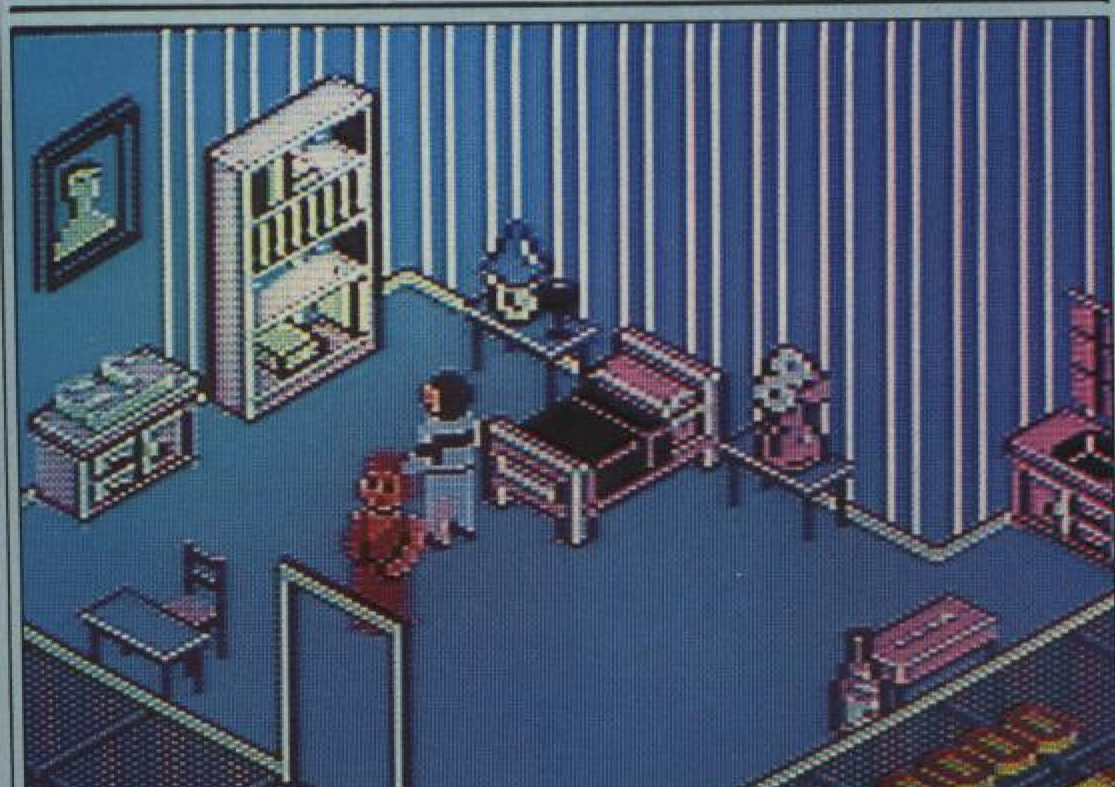




Contents:

SPY VS SPY – an all-time classic which gets better with age
SPY VS SPY: THE ISLAND CAPER – sufficiently different from the original, and still as much fun
SPY VS SPY: ARCTIC ANTICS – apart from a couple of new traps, very similar to *The Island Caper*. Definitely the weakest of the three

OVERALL 92%
An unmissable slice of Commodore history. Each of the series offers fun-filled one or two-player action, and are the sort of games you return to time and time again.



ALL-STARS

The Edge, £8.99 double cassette pack

Contents:

RISK – excellent horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up with outstanding graphics
INSIDE OUTING – not a prolapse, but a fast 3D arcade adventure which requires plenty of perseverence
BOBBY BEARING – cute, appealing and highly playable forced perspective arcade adventure
SHADOW SKIMMER – superb graphics and slick presentation are let down by the very limited shoot and search action
QUO VADIS – wobbling arcade adventure that should have retired years ago
FIRE QUEST – instantly forgettable dross from 1985
BRIAN BLOODAXE – a platform blast from the past that should have stayed there
WIZARDRY – incredibly obscure and highly frustrating arcade adventure
FAIRLIGHT – a neat forced perspective arcade adventure let down by its plodding pace
ALMAZZ – laborious and drawn out exploration game

OVERALL 80%
Hits the heights with *RISK*, *Bobby Bearing* and *Inside Outing* and plumbs the depths with *Brian Bloodaxe* and *Quo Vadis*. Well worth a look at the price, though.

▶

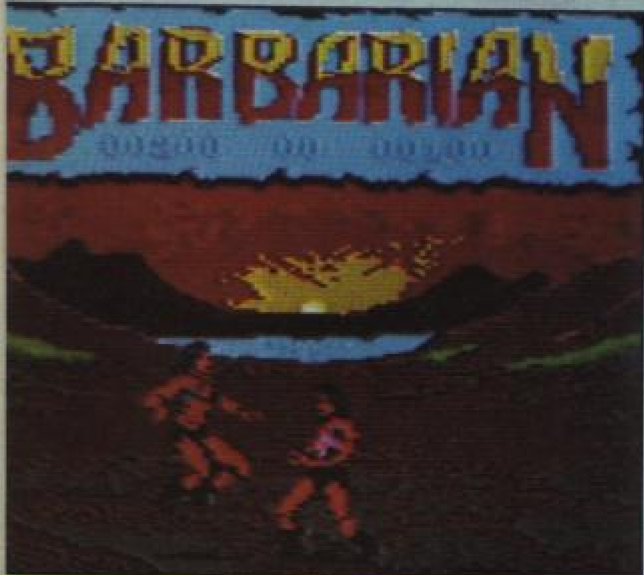


COMPUTER CLASSICS

Beau Jolly, £6.99 cass

Contents:
ZYNAPS – very playable horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up
DYNAMITE DAN – an average platform game that's still good fun
CAULDRON II – unusual mixture of platform and arcade adventuring with fabulous graphics
ALIENS – atmospheric and very worthy film tie-in
INTO THE EAGLE'S NEST – slick and highly playable *Gauntlet* variant

OVERALL 84%
A diverse and competent range of games at a very reasonable price. Look it up.









WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS

Ocean, £9.95 double cassette pack

Contents:
INTERNATIONAL KARATE + – the best beat 'em up available, with unsurpassed two-player action
RENEGADE – street fighting mayhem across five scrolling levels
RAMPAGE – three-player arcade game which soon becomes boring
BARBARIAN – bloody, addictive sword fighting action
SUPER SPRINT – playable, but bug-ridden race game

OVERALL 83%
Only three of the titles could possibly be called champions, but this compilation is still very good value for money.

ARCHON COLLECTION

Electronic Arts, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk

Contents:
ARCHON – timeless blend of strategy board game and arcade action
ADEPT: ARCHON II – adds a couple of twists to the original game, but isn't quite as enjoyable

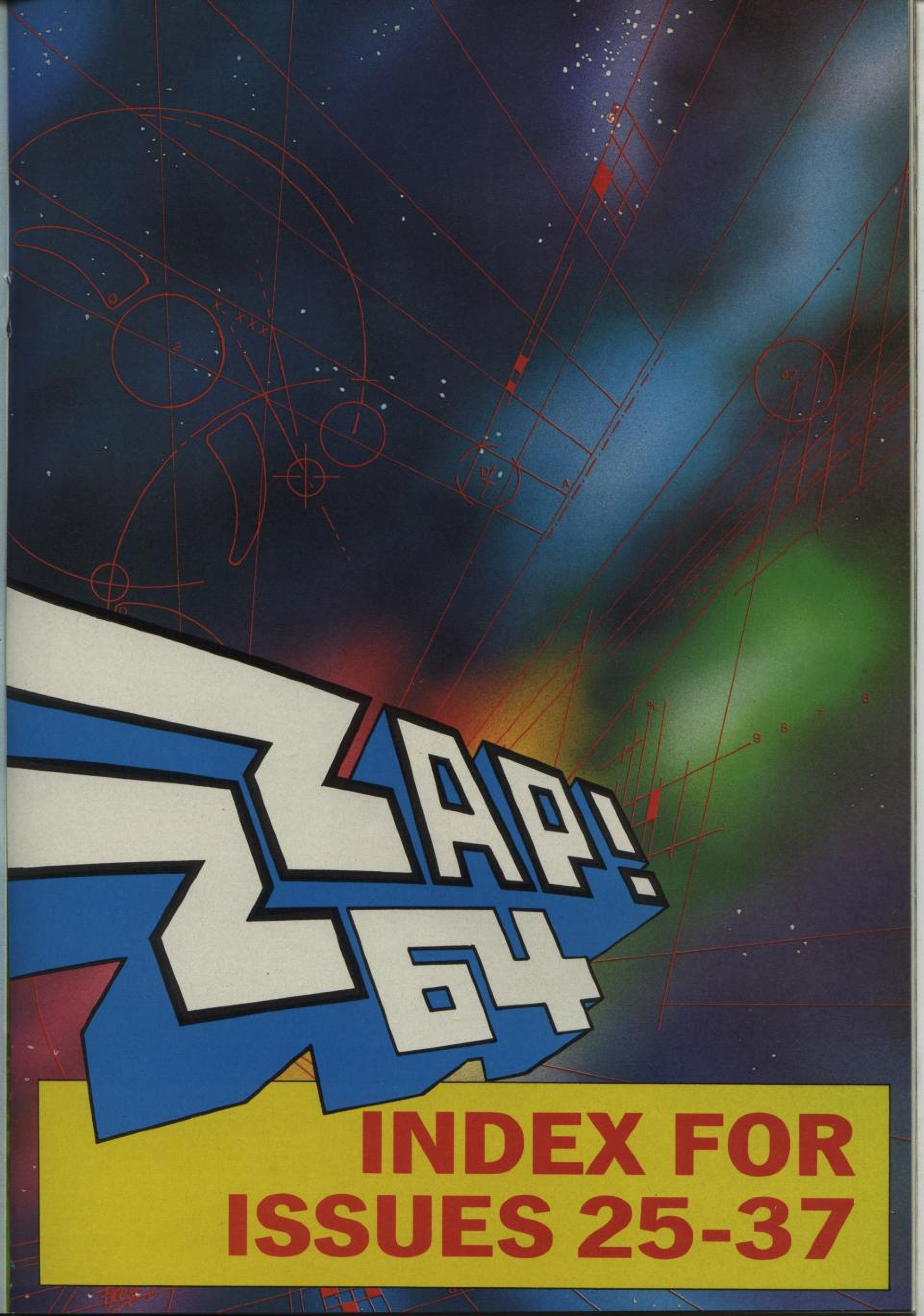
OVERALL 81%
Two unusual and compelling titles which are well worth trying out.

ARCADE ALLEY

US Gold, £9.99 double cassette pack, £14.99 disk

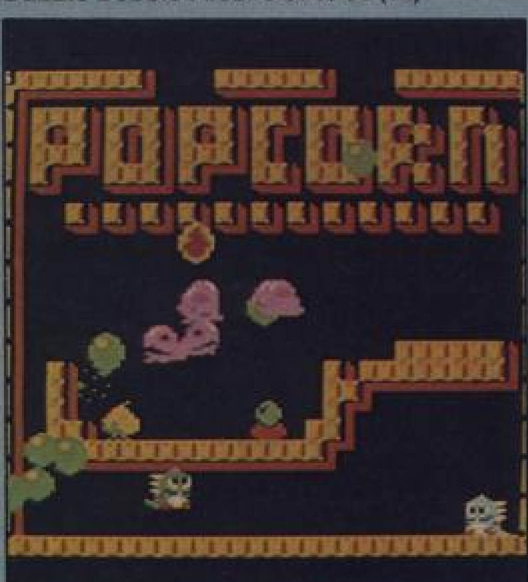
Contents:
KUNG-FU MASTER – fairly good conversion of the dated arcade game
TAG-TEAM WRESTLING – the worst wrestling game imaginable, complete with crummy graphics and sound
KARATE CHAMP – one of the original one-on-one fighting games, looking decidedly crumbly these days
EXPRESS RAIDER – mildly compelling *Kung-Fu Master* game set on a train
BREAKTHRU – an utterly pathetic conversion, inept in every possible sense
LAST MISSION – mediocre multidirectionally scrolling shoot 'em up

OVERALL 43%
The original arcade games aren't much cop, and these conversions range from barely average to the pits.


ZZAP! 64
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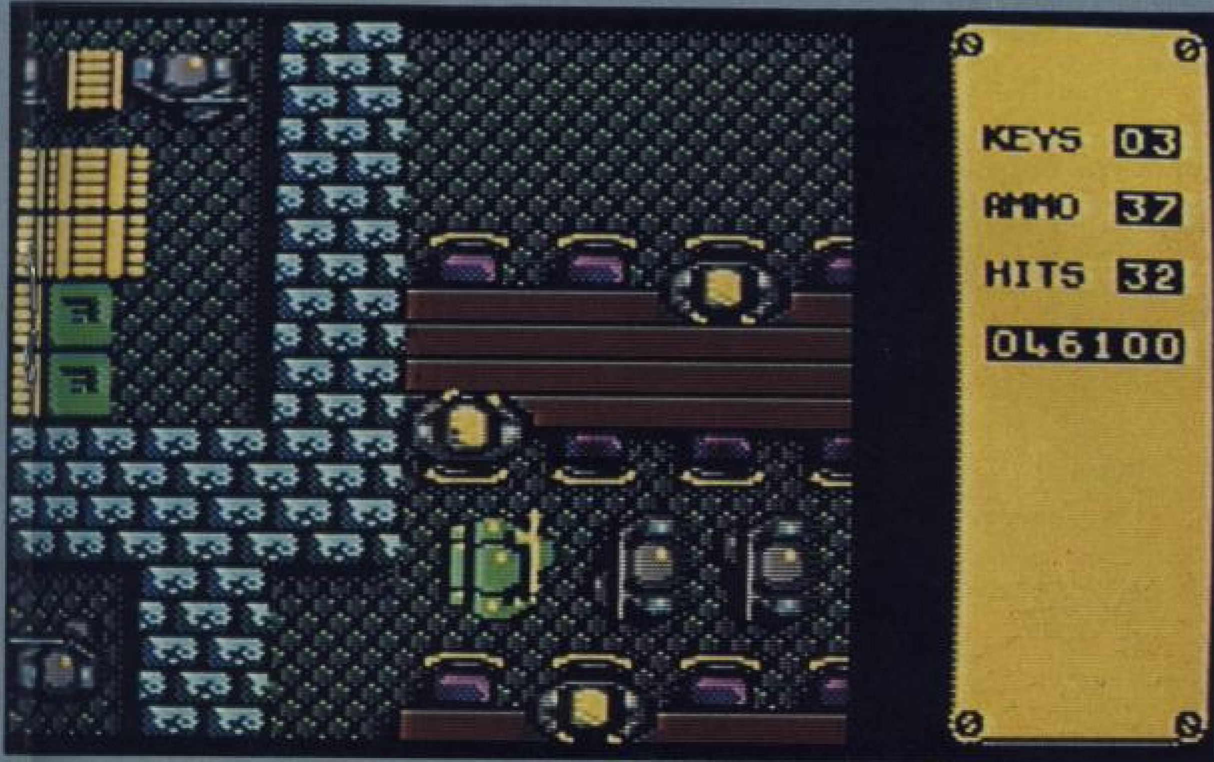
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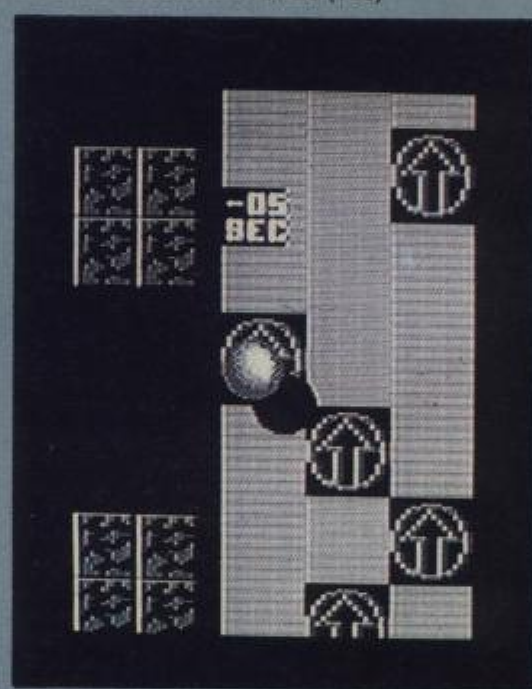
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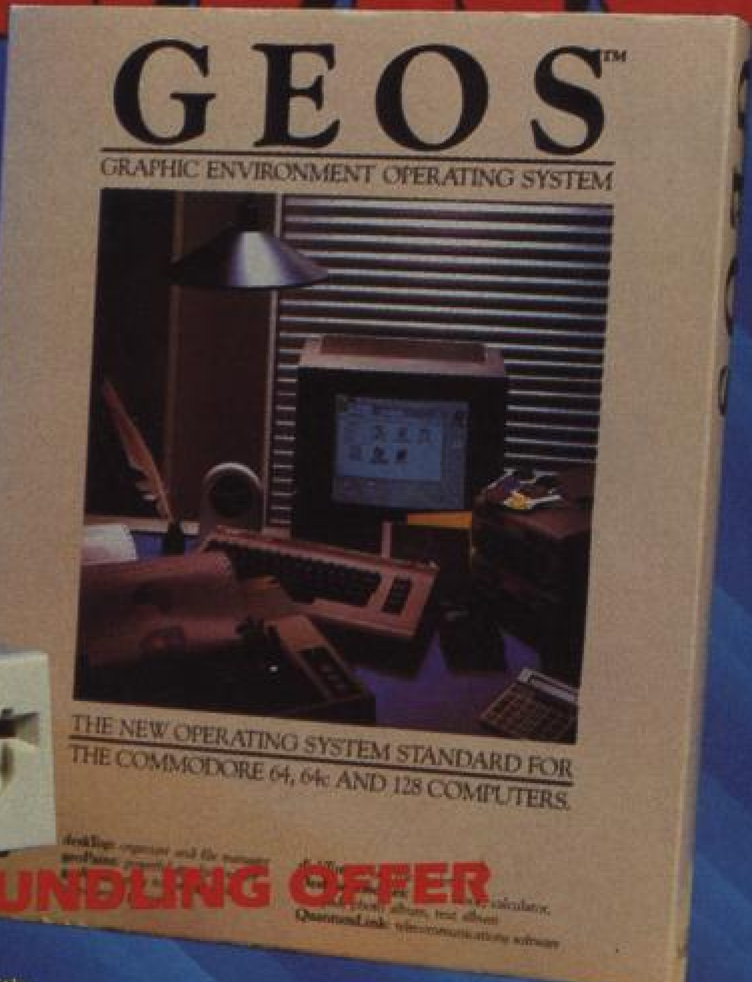
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SLAYER OF THE DAMNED
Son of the Gods, curse of his fellow men, Hercules is set 12 awesome tasks to exonerate the sin of murdering his children. Armed by his divine fathers he sets forth to face the hideous skeleton hordes and ultimately overcome the evil minotaur. To slay the damned is his only saviour in repenting his sins.
BLOOD BROTHERS
"Our blood is mixed,
We are as one,
Let no man or beast come between us,
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ZZAP! 64

WHEN THE BOOT GOES IN

ZZAP! CHALLENGE

Once again it's the most important time of the month, when a brave and fearless video fighter is selected from my highscore table to challenge an odious, puny, bile-stirring member of the ZZAP! team. This month, the scum of the Earth have put flaccid Paul Glancey **forward, a frail creature of pasty visage, smug expression and insectoid limbs. I can never understand what he says because he suffers from verbal diarrhoea (a condition called 'Geordie Accent', vomit-stain Rignall tells me), and always has empty pockets (a curious disease apparently called 'Cumsfrom Upnorf').**

The challenger is Steve Lee**, a joystick-wielder from a stupid town called Guildford, which is situated in the manure-sounding county of Surrey. He's 17, and has been making regular appearances in my highscore table for a few years.**

The game I've selected for the challenge is Buggy Boy**, a racing game which tests reactions and skill. Knowing that bug-eyed Glancey is about as co-ordinated as a retarded slug with its entrails falling out, I have high hopes.**



► **Showing confidence and composure, Steve Lee drives on**



Steve Lee arrives at the challenge arena with a confident look in his eye, and a Cheetah 125 joystick in his hand. Mr two-dimensional (you can't see him side on) has also brought his own joystick, a Euromax Professional. While the duo indulge in warm-up session, I pop a Toilet Duck á l'orange into the Microwave and have a quick drink to fortify myself for the epic battle that awaits.

After snorting a few lines of Persil, I command both players to stop and lay down the rules of the contest: three games of one race. When Paul's amoeboid brain cells have managed to ingest that simple piece of information – a task which takes several minutes – I order the first game to commence.

As soon as the starting klaxon sounds, Steve accelerates his buggy to top speed and leaves a skid mark on the starting grid. Gormless Glancey, eyes popping against his glasses leaves one in his underpants.

Both immediately start collecting flags to boost their score, and I settle down in anticipation of a memorable contest. Good driving ensues for the first lap, and both players cross the line within a second of each other. The two are still neck and neck halfway around the second lap, when a sudden wimpy whimper followed by a nauseatingly pathetic sigh of relief informs me that ghastly Glancey just had a close shave with a rock. The strange smell that permeates the atmosphere shortly after informs me that it must have been a very close shave.

On lap three, my challenger has a tiny advantage over his foul competitor, showing that he must be racing the fastest. I sit, transfixed, willing him on. Suddenly a high-pitched whingeing cry comes from spindleshanks, who shouts out ►



► 'Have we started yet' asks Glancey as Steve Lee reaches the end of the first lap

something intelligible. Chubby Houghton translates and tells me that his monitor briefly switched itself off, and he crashed, losing precious time. Could this be an ill-conceived plan to distract my challenger? Being of a most fabulous and kind personality, I offer the idiotic moron with the simpleton's face the chance to restart. He declines, thinking he's 'still doing well'. I ask him again slowly, and check that he understands what I'm saying, but he still carries on. This only compounds my view that he is of serious mental deficiency, and I sit back, waiting for him to be slaughtered in the first round.

Steve, on the other hand, is cruising ahead, collecting flags and bonus points with renewed vigour. After five laps he crosses the finishing line, and I watch as all his collected bonuses are added up – and feel my circuits glow as the final score reads 110,260. The lean machine crosses the finish line 12 seconds later, and I watch with great satisfaction as his score is added up to read 102,070. My challenger has won the first round, and I am on the way to victory!

With the scrawny Glancey looking shocked, bewildered and completely stupid, I order the second game to begin. Steve is looking very confident indeed, while prattish Paul, the pathetic, putrid, prune is looking visibly shaken. With the klaxon turned up full blast to try and rattle ZZAP!'s bag of bones, the second game begins.

Within seconds of the start, the Great God of Video smiles upon me, and I watch as the emaciated Glancey careers straight into a rock. His expression of sheer bovine panic is a joy to behold. Turning my sampled laughter circuits up to the full, I move closer to shake him even more. One again, my prayers are answered as the man with the gargoyle face drives straight into a wall! Hah! Downing a large Vim and Vomit and taking a bite out of my Toilet Duck, I sit back and await the skinny one's humiliating defeat.

Glancing over to Steve's monitor, I'm pleased to see that he's still making good headway, and has passed the first lap marker with ease. I continue to stare, when a wrong move results in his crashing into a rock. Stupid fool! He keeps his composure, and races on. I look across and see that the clothes hanger has managed to limp around the first lap and cross the line with a full two seconds to spare. He continues on, and I wonder whether the wind resistance caused by his oversized hearing receptacles is possibly slowing him down. Both racers finish another two laps without further ado, and I watch as time slowly runs out for smugness Glancey. Nothing short of a miracle could save him now . . .

Steve crosses the finish line and I watch eagerly to see the final score – 105,640. Skin 'n' bone is still crippling around the last lap, and finally manages to hobble over the finish line. His final score is 95,730 . . . I HAVE WON! This so-called ZZAP! champion has been made to look the miserable and inept twerp he really is.

After handing a £30 software voucher to Steve, I grab a specially imported 1974 Chateau Domestos and celebrate MY victory . . .



◄ Ego and Large have difficulty fitting odious Glancey into the bin . . .



▼ So they hack off his legs



▲ Putting out the rubbish

THE SCORELORD'S HIGH SCORING HEROES

720° (US Gold)
286,500 David Mothersole, Bishop's Stortford, Herts
252,800 Gaz Orton, Nottingham
218,300 Brenden Lewis, Melbourne, Australia

BEAT IT (Mastertronic)
778,535 Stuart Scattergood, Deeside, Clwyd
446,095 Anthony Byng, Bromsgrove, Worcs
323,030 Archibald Singh, Pratt's Bottom, Oxon

BANGKOK KNIGHTS (System 3)
69,247 Faisal Hamid, Perth, Scotland
57,300 Steven Packer, Chelmsford, Essex
37,260 Gary Leslie, Berwick upon Tweed, Northumberland

BARBARIAN (Palace Software)
283,600 Grant Mundy, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes
200,800 Jan Farmer, London SW16
160,000 Paul Griffiths, Llandudno, N Wales

BATTLE VALLEY (Rack-It)
739,300 Karim Bouali, Tooting, London
489,610 Martin Lear, Huddersfield, W Yorks
455,550 Neil & Kenny, Craigentinny, Edinburgh

BUBBLE BOBBLE (Firebird)
5,909,500 Jonothan Russell, Wokingham, Berks
5,634,090 Neil & Kenny, Craigentinny, Edinburgh
5,012,300 Ravinder Saluja, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire

BUGGY BOY (Elite)
119,510 Jake E, West Bromwich, W Mids
116,710 Daniel Roberts, Newhaven, Sussex
112,550 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers

COMBAT SCHOOL
302,060 Paul Inman, Yardley, Birmingham
290,630 Paul Rice, Yardley, Birmingham
249,030 Steven Packer, Chelmsford, Essex

COSMIC CAUSEWAY (Gremlin Graphics)
431,651 Steven Phypers, Sunnyhill, Derby
353,627 Paul Garbutt, South Shields, Tyne & Wear
342,214 David Booth, Riddings, Derbyshire

DRILLER (Incentive)
668,580 Steve Pratt, Leighton Buzzard, Beds
310,750 Steve Lee, Guildford, Surrey
240,550 E Monkhouse, Newcastle upon Tyne

GAME OVER (Imagine)
145,550 Dean James, West Bromwich, W Midlands
103,650 Nicholas Gielen, Brussels, Belgium
99,400 Mike Thomas, Caerphilly, Wales

GAUNTLET II (US Gold)
Thor
12,761,453 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks
5,202,000 Martin Lear, Huddersfield, W Yorks
5,001,763 COP, Newcastle upon Tyne

Merlin
24,863,449 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks
7,625,822 Martin Lear, Huddersfield, W Yorks
948,970 John Glynn, Newcastle, Staffs

Thyra
11,296,318 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks
3,343,222 P Hedley & J Lister, Newcastle upon Tyne
2,001,223 Martin Lear, Huddersfield, W Yorks

Questor
9,817,642 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks
4,621,442 Martin Lear, Huddersfield, W Yorks

GUNSHIP (Microprose)
302,390 Paul Griffiths, Llandudno, N Wales
279,985 David Mothersole, Bishops Stortford, Herts
278,785 Richard Mellor, Bridgewater, Somerset

HUNTER'S MOON (Thalamus)
472,150 Zsuzui Bettison, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Notts
227,375 Matthew Upton, Elmley Castle, Worcs.
128,950 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers

I, BALL (Firebird)
104,040 Marc Johnson, Broughton, Chester
60,249 Edward Marshall, Haxby, York
54,660 M Blaser, Cheadle, Cheshire

INTERNATIONAL KARATE+ (System 3)
441,000 Stephen Cargill, Upminster, Essex
332,000 Wayne Chapman, Stoke Ferry, Norfolk
331,000 Jan Farmer, London SW16

IO (Rainbird)
99,040 Steven Packer, Chelmsford, Essex
44,210 S Brooking, Slough, Berks

MEGA APOCALYPSE (Martech)
187,620 Peter Clarke, Hartlepool, Cleveland
173,540 J Constable, Wymington, Northants
153,060 Matthew Phypers, Sunnyhill, Derby

METROCROSS (US Gold)
1,119,100 Matthew Raymond, Para Hills, Australia
1,117,900 Jan Farmer, London SW16
1,116,200 Matthew Sears, Worcester

MORPHEUS (Rainbird)
1,321,485 Richard Pembridge, Wirral, Merseyside
628,463 Per Hoffmann, Vordingborg, Denmark
232,694 Keith McLeman, Fraserburgh, Aberdeenshire

NEBULUS (Hewson)
111,870 Matthew Moriarty, Hurst Green, E Sussex
79,885 Nick Pitman, Guardbridge, Fife
78,465 Jon Cook, York, N Yorks

OUT RUN (US Gold)
66,728,403 Martin Lear, Huddersfield, W Yorks
53,926,680 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers
53,727,360 Stephen Findlay, Parkgate, Scotland

PLATOON (Ocean)
1,004,600 Michael Aubert, Exeter, Devon
614,800 Matthew upton, Elmley Castle, Worcs.
456,200 Marc Hodge, Selby, N Yorks

PROHIBITION (Infogrames)
$22,155 Sebastian Stephen, Victoria, Australia
$18,280 Richard Pargeter, Coventry, W Mids
$8,370 Andy Gaskell, Bootle, Merseyside

QUEDEX (Thalamus)
999 Steve Pratt, Leighton Buzzard, Beds
935 Jon Cook, York, N Yorks
949 Martin Huisent, Numansdorf, Holland

REBOUNDER (Gremlin Graphics)
11,250,073 Craig Knight, Keyworth, Notts
2,470,584 Marc Hodge, Selby, N Yorks
1,438,372 Robin Strickland, London E1

RENEGADE (Imagine)
98,820 Andrew Perry, Auckland, New Zealand
92,400 M Alchorne, Leeds, W Yorks
89,400 Stuart Hall, Peterborough, Cambs

ROAD RUNNER (US Gold)
766,580 Glenn Black, Gainsborough, Lincs
576,690 Nigel Bird, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton
287,900 Gary Hurst, Haverhill, Suffolk

SKATE ROCK SIMULATOR (Mastertronic)
326,380 Brian Hambley, Prescot, Merseyside
288,430 Justin Cole, Huddersfield, W Yorks
239,020 Sean Walker, Melbourne, Australia

SLAMBALL (Americana)
11,078,440, G Leslie, Berwick upon Tweed, Northumberland
8,399,730 Dean Betts, Edenbridge, Kent
7,462,660 Carleton Shaw, London, N10

SLAP FIGHT (Imagine)
586,000 Matthew Viveash, Chinnor, Oxon
477,900 Nick Pavitt, Flushing, Cornwall
423,850 Mattias Lukinen, 13900 Wermdo, Sweden

SPORE (Mastertronic)
955,460 Terry Redfern, Buxton, Derbys
940,300 Neil White, Craigentinny, Edinburgh
936,428 Ian Clement, Bramhall, Stockport

STAR PAWS (Software Projects)
587,683 Edward Yu, Raynes Park, London
468,306 Stephen Laidlaw, Leigham, Plymouth
464,314 Elvis Patel, Bradford, W Yorks

SUPER SPRINT (Electric Dreams)
962,300 Eric Watson, Berwick-on-Tweed, Northumberland
271,500 Matthew Sears, Worcs
154,900 Dean Thomas, Machynlleth, Wales

TARGET RENEGADE (Imagine)
169,800 Ray Passelle, Yatton, Bristol
117,200 Harris Marcou, Higham, Kent

TETRIS (Mirrorsoft)
34,470 Stuart Scattergood, Deeside, Clwyd
28,820 Michael Reineke, Lüdinghausen, W Germany
10,632 Remco Van Disk, Alphen A/D Rijn

THING BOUNCES BACK (Gremlin Graphics)
3,769,925 Alan Wescombe, Swindon, Wilts
2,053,532 William Callaghan, Tipton, W Mids
1,877,555 Casey Gallacher, Swallowfield

THUNDERCATS (Elite)
286,850 Paul Inman, Yardley, Birmingham
131,250 Jonathan Richards, Nuneaton, Warks

TOY BIZARRE (Activision)
545,850 Bjorn Halen, Paipis, Finland
275,720 Michael Sharpe, Peterborough, Cambs
223,420 JD Oliver, Ipswich, Suffolk

URIDIUM + (Hewson)
575,005 Tim Goldee, No Fixed Abode
478,025 Neville Lewis, Port Talbot, S Wales
244,505 Michael Lykke, Viborg, Denmark

VIDEO MEANIES (Mastertronic)
362,103 Abid Hussain, Longsight, Manchester
250,541 Stuart Scattergood, Clwyd, N Wales
250,381 Michael Palmer, Maidstone, Kent

VOIDRUNNER (Mastertronic)
6,492,260 Richard Hawkins, Woking, Surrey
6,253,825 Grant Bannister, Luton, Beds
5,997,326 D Rice, Southgate, London

WONDER BOY (Activision)
852,210 Robert Crisafio, Queens Park, W Australia
467,540 P Sampson, Victoria, Australia
403,930 Steven Catania, Springvale, Australia

XEVIOUS (US Gold)
1,328,540 Colin Greenaway, Ballysillan Rd, Belfast
824,380 Fintan Brady, Virginia, Ireland
412,940 Matthew Ward, Bromley, Kent

ZENJI (Firebird)
29,805 Julian Rignall, ZZAP! Towers
28,820 Michael Reineke, Lüdinghausen, W Germany
24,300 Lawry Simm, Thornton, Liverpool

ZOLYX (Firebird)
605,681 Edward Yu, Raynes Park, London
524,318 Rob Housley, Thamesmead, London
377,413 M Blaser, Cheadle, Cheshire

ZYBEX (Zeppelin)
445,150 Ged Keaveney, Huddersfield, W Yorks
110,050 Marc Hodge, Selby, N Yorks
37,450 Tery Redfern, Buxton, Derbyshire

ZYNAPS (Hewson)
212,400 Jonathon Day, Gosport, Hants
209,375 Eamonn Scanlon, CO Kerry, Ireland
198,440 Mark Andrews, Netherton, W Mids



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WALKER'S WAY

By Martin Walker

Month three: and the binary embryo begins to take shape



Friday 8 March

After spending the last few days in the wilds of Lincolnshire, I was raring to go with some fresh ideas – but there was a power cut all day! I had to resort to washing the car instead – I couldn't tell what colour it was anyway! Still, it's a chance to explain what the new game will be about before I get coding again.

The dwellers of the metallic cities live in two vast interlinked square complexes – in fact each level is designed like two chessboards one above the other, a sort of 3D maze. To explore each complex you can travel freely through its corridors, but some areas of one half can only be reached by travelling through link tunnels from the other side – the problem being that the tunnel doors may be locked, and the keys are mobile and roaming somewhere in the city!

Wednesday 9 March

Back with a vengeance. The rationalisation of level plotting is now complete – each part of the maze is designed like a piece of Scalextric; bends, straights and crossroads so that all I have to specify is the relevant piece of 'track' for each linking section of the 16 screen layout.

WARNING. Technical bit follows for enthusiasts only. All normal(?) readers please skip to next section. *Hi, coding freaks everywhere. Here's the diary equivalent of the scrolly message in the border! Each of the mazes is formed on a 'board' of 8x8 squares, so only 64 bytes are needed to store each layout, and by packing two squares of information into each byte, both 'sides' of each city can be stored in the same 64 bytes, a total of 32 screens worth! Wow! Hi to John, Dan, Robin and John.*

The decision has now been taken to avoid spending excessive time tweaking until later – I want to finish this before next Christmas! Anyway, did anyone notice that the engine exhaust of the Hunter was animated in all 16 directions of travel? Did I really spend a total of 4 days on the main ship explosion? Who spotted that the infobars dimmed just like cinema lights as you entered the Relaxation Mode? Perhaps if someone would pay me by the hour . . .

Friday 11 March

Having finally decided on the design for each 'track' I have to produce some dummy screens by hand to make sure that the universal system looks good in all styles. By the end of the day it has to be said that the universal system works well for a single piece of track, but by the time a complete screen full is put together it's very blocky. Back to the drawing board.

Although my disk of dummy screens has many pleasing 'looks', more thought is now required to design one that can be used in a more versatile way. It's rather like trying to build a housing estate with a set of standard bolt-together rooms. All I've got so far is a wimpy Wimpy!

Saturday 12 March

Produced a definitive set of track designs which work well in quantity. It took yesterday's large scale practice to show what would work well – and now to surgically remove the scrolling routines from Hunter's (pass me those rusty scissors someone).

This is the hard way to start a project – nothing but mock-ups for weeks. Once it's done, though, the game is well under way in one fell swoop. At the end of several hours of surgery, I was left with what I hope are all the relevant sections of code, except for declaring the zero page variables – I will do that later when the first section of new code has been written. Complex, eh?

Sunday 13 March

Wrote most of the routine to plot the maze. The master program will take the magic 64 bytes and convert it to 16384 bytes of screen design.

TECHNICAL BIT – Each maze has 64 squares; each square has 16 'chunks' each chunk has 16 characters; there are 16 chunks in each style library. Yes, I know it sounds like a nightmare. Where do you start? In this case on the inside – once you can successfully plot one chunk it's time to try for a whole square, and so on. At least that's the way I should do it – the logical way, but I'm going to be naughty and try to do the whole lot at one. Then if the dreaded blank screen appears when I fire it up I can be at least bypass each routine in turn to isolate the offending one. Hope this makes sense; when I'm in programming mode words tend to come out strangely, to say the least!

Monday 14 March

The big day. Another few hours finishing off the new routines and then debugging starts. I'm keeping my fingers crossed (what an unprofessional attitude – of course it will all work with no problems)!

Later, a warm feeling fills my being. No, I haven't messed myself – the whole caboodle worked first time! As I jumped into the game the first entire 16 screen steel city met my gaze. It really felt like exploring as my little craft roared about the empty corridors, and I'm very pleased with the overall effect.

Now that I can see 64 of the squares all together it is relieving to note that you can't see the joins, and unless you have been reading this diary most people probably won't realise what has been done. I spent the rest of the day trying out the different designs of craft and fiddling with the city colour scheme.

Tuesday 15 March

Time to press on with different designs of city to check the last few days of work really are universal. The second 'look' to hit the streets (groan) is a satin corrugated metal, and the third is my original brass look. Both came out nicely, but I'll be glad to get more spot features in like the tunnel entrances and static defence systems, as these will add even more colour and variety.

Thursday 17 March

Changed my mind about the brass look, and spent several hours changing chunks around to improve things (what did I say about not tweaking). In the end it was back to the character editor to redesign the corners of my brass pipes, and then rekeying the data into the chunk table. Let's hope that settles it – I'm spending more time plumbing than coding!

The dreaded read error appeared from my disk drive in the afternoon – I sent it for repair earlier this year and hoped it would last a bit longer before throwing a wobbly. Let's hope it can hang on for a bit before I have to lose it again. To cheer myself up a bit I had a quick game of *Xenon* on the Atari ST. I've lost more working hours to this than anything else in the last month or so. I know that it's got nothing revolutionary in the gameplay area, but it just plays so well! My current best is the end of level three, but the difficulty is set to be challenging all the way through. For my money the name of the programming team – The Bitmap Brothers – is more memorable than the title of the game. That's fame for them!

Friday 18 March

Started thinking about the special pieces of cityscape, like the tunnel entrances and static defences. Designed a recoiling gun emplacement and a tunnel entrance but they still need more work yet. As the tunnel entrances are all normally locked, my intention is to animate the doors sliding open as they key passes over them. An ideal opportunity to use one of the

new metallic sound effects!

Opening the tunnel entrances will simply be a matter of getting one of the mobile keys to pass the relevant spot. Controlling them will be similar to a sheepdog trial – simply nudge one or fire at it to drive it in the desired direction. The problem will come if you get ambushed by a gang of city dwellers, as the key will wander off in the confusion. There'll be a radar of sorts to help spot where the action is!

Saturday 19 March

The day started in ping-pong mode, as I flitted from one thought to another. I tried improving a pipe fitting and ended up designing a whole new city look that fits well into the overall scheme of things. Colours were then inspected and changed to add maximum variety.

In my quest for the finer details of gameplay (even when I have hardly started the action) copious notes were made about possible adversary types and weapon systems. Since your craft has an energy 'bar' which falls with damage sustained, it'll be possible to have indestructible enemy bullets to dodge (not fair if they can destroy you at first go). I fancy the idea of 'bouncing strobobombs' (©MW 1988) in addition to the normal fireballs. These will give you the power to fire around corners and ricochet into particularly nasty adversaries, without getting yourself in the line of fire.

Monday 22 March

I had a phone call from Robin at Cyberdine Systems on Saturday. *Armalite* will be ready to playtest and add sound effects on Tuesday, so I've arranged to drive down to Exeter to install them myself. Many additions to it have been made in the coding department since my previous demo, and every time I think the graphics can't get any better Robin improves them yet again.

A couple of new sound effects are needed, so this afternoon saw the monitor shaking with a new pneumatic hammer and a sizzling electric field. The latter caused my wife Belinda to clap her hands over her ears and run out of the room, so it must be quite realistic! The poor old loudspeaker will soon need a re-coning.

Wednesday 24 March

Yesterday was spent in Exeter. The 250 mile round trip was well worth it, as not only did we get the sound effects in and working for rough 'cartesting' but I got my first feedback on this project as well. I'm glad to report a favourable response to the cities. Various suggestions were made for future additions to gameplay (they are a generous lot with their thoughts!), and I returned with my brain full of the further ideas that occurred to me while driving back up the motorway.

Today was spent working through various ideas with the sprite editor. The original craft design that I was so pleased with may need rethinking. Although it's very detailed, using hi-resolution sprite overlays, the backgrounds cannot achieve the same crispness using multicolour mode. The city has a soft focus look that is pleasing, but the craft, being more sharply defined, appears to be closer and thus flying above the corridors rather than along them. Against the background of 'space' this is not a problem, but unless I give an option to fly the present design is off to the archives for the present. I now fancy a spider-like design with animated legs!

Friday 26 March

More problems with the 1541 disk drive today. It's definitely got to go back again for repair, with the most difficult of all faults to trace – the intermittent one! There are now three of my work disks that contain at least one file that refuses to load; today a file refused to be saved at all, and the stage has now been reached where I don't trust the drive one little bit. Shouting at it didn't appear to help! Working with it any more is really like sitting on a time bomb – sooner or later something really important will get corrupted or I'll explode! Unfortunately, the previous time it was sent for repair at the beginning of February no obvious fault could be found. Let's hope luck is with me this time, and the fault shows up while the engineer is watching!

At least things looked up later on – I got a novel idea for a new weapon. As your craft has an 'energy bar' a method is needed to recharge after collisions or attacks. The obvious way to do this would be to give a full charge at the end of each completed level, or to allow the player to discover energy banks in the city. Try this method for size. You have a charger that can be launched from your craft to home in on the aliens. On contact it drains energy from them on each pass until they are destroyed (unless it is destroyed first by a direct hit), and when fully charged you can command it to return and transfer its load to you. I intend to give it a main colour of white (when in trouble send out the white charger, get it?).

Saturday 26 March

I started the day like a demon possessed, and completely redesigned my steel pipes. No tweaking – who am I trying to kid? If any possible improvements are spotted I 'go for it'. On a production line you'd be able to spot me right next to the huge bottleneck, but my bits would be neater! Anyway, as you progress with any graphic design, experience grows and your more practised eye begins to notice the little deficiencies in the initial work. That's my excuse anyway!

After getting sidetracked, out came my book on Airbrushing. I don't possess an airbrush but the techniques of rendering different materials are just as useful for computer graphics, dealing as they do with reflections and textures. After much study, and not a little fiddling with the character editor, I amazed myself and produced a chrome pipe!

Sunday 27 March

Another big session with the sprite editor today, with no finished results. Groan! My main problem with sprite design in this project is not having the black background of 'space'. Any colour shows up against a black surround and realistic metallic shading can be achieved by using three other shades (like my metal cities for instance), relying on the background colour being black for definition.

Sprites on the 64 can only have three colours. In space you can rely on black all round to add a fourth colour for crisp sprite designs. However, against a complex backdrop, only two methods work. You can either surround them with a black border (as in Slapfight for instance) or use a predominance of white (as in Alleykat). Both methods ensure that no part of the sprite will merge into the background as it moves around the landscape. The black border approach can however look very 'blocky' and the all-white version simply does not look right with my metal cities. I'm getting there, albeit slowly, but it's certainly tough going. Perhaps tomorrow?

Monday 28 March

Yippee! If only all working days could be like this. Today it seemed that nothing could go wrong at all. One of the many nice things about dealing with Thalamus is the help and support they give the programmer during a project. I now have a disk drive on loan while mine is returned for further scrutiny by Trilogic – no further corruption in the Walker household (on my disks anyway)!

Also, by lunchtime I had my first crispy sprite (and no, it wasn't a takeaway!) and during the afternoon I got about four more, including some animated ones. They use black and white for the common colours, and a variety of middling hues for the third, but still retain the colour shading which adds so much depth and roundness. I'm very pleased, and the city now has its first inhabitants.

Tuesday 29 March

A good solid day of work. You can always tell when the project has some momentum, as you never even think of playing a game – you're too busy working! This was just one of those sort of days. The Sprite Editor, having been reinstated after yesterday's performance, produced a further selection of inhabitants (with just a little help from me).

Wednesday 30 March

Ho-hum! Another day out in the big wide world. Once again I trekked into another set of software outlets, in search of paradise and the game of my dreams. Not even *IO* (Firebird) seems to be out yet. Nothing but row after row of budget software, and just a few unknowns (no reviews yet).

If only you could have games demonstrators (the good old days!) we would all have fewer disappointments when we get home with a new piece of software. You know the feeling – shall I make a cup of coffee first or load it up straight away? The mounting anticipation as the loading music strikes up (or buzzes into action as the case may be). The impressive loading screen. And then, when your excitement reaches a peak, and you press the fire button to start . . . your mouth hangs open in shock as you realise you have just wasted your money. Yes, I've got a few of those in my collection. Nowadays I wait for the ZZAP! review – keep up the good work guys!

Thursday 31 March

I've just emerged unscathed after completing a wonderful game of *Delta*. After all this time I still come back to it, and thanks to an unmentionable rival magazine (hi, Gary) my backup version now has infinite weapons as well as infinite lives. Even loading the cassette to instill the new 'POKE' routine gave me a chance to play with the amazing mix-e-loader once again. I still rate the *Delta* title music and in-game soundtrack as the best thing ever done by Rob Hubbard. Come back to England all is forgiven!

Monday 4 April

What a weekend too. On Friday my friend Chris Paynes from Manchester arrived to stay for a few days. Amongst many other enjoyable diversions we had a marathon 11 hour session of playing games and looking at software in general on the 64, Atari ST and the old Atari 800, as well as Chris's new Apple Mackintosh. It was very revealing, to say the least!

He brought some borrowed ST software, which we looked at first of all. What a let down! *Rolling Thunder* on the ST has a playing area of 1/4 screen but looked as if it were being scrolled from Basic! And how about this for realism – if you are shot while jumping you lay down and die in mid air!!! I couldn't believe it! Then we attempted to play *Dark Castle* on the ST (a great medieval platform game on the Mackintosh). After loading and swapping between three different disks before we could start at all, I went left on the first screen instead of right and we had to swap disks two more times before we could start again! And, during all this time, because I have a 1 mb ST there was 512K of empty memory sitting there unused! Surely someone must soon realise that it is easy to check for extra memory and use it as a Ram-disk!

Honestly, we had more fun playing simultaneous two-player games on the old Atari 800 – *Basketball* and *Dandy* (NOT the Electric Dreams version but the original – copyright 1983). It just shows that gameplay is far more important than advanced graphics and megabytes of memory. As Julian said in last months editorial – with a few honourable exceptions there's little on the 16-bit machines at present that is that much better than what is already available on 8-bit machines. Long live the 64!

ZZAP! BACK

It's time to turn back the clock and have another look at some of those golden oldies: the games under scrutiny are gleaned from Issue 13, which appeared all of two years ago. Julian Rignall and Gordon Houghton take hindsight into account and decide just how those classics would fare today.

GAMES ZZAPBACKED

ALTER EGO
SUPER BOWL
THRUST
PSI 5 TRADING COMPANY

ALTER EGO
Activision

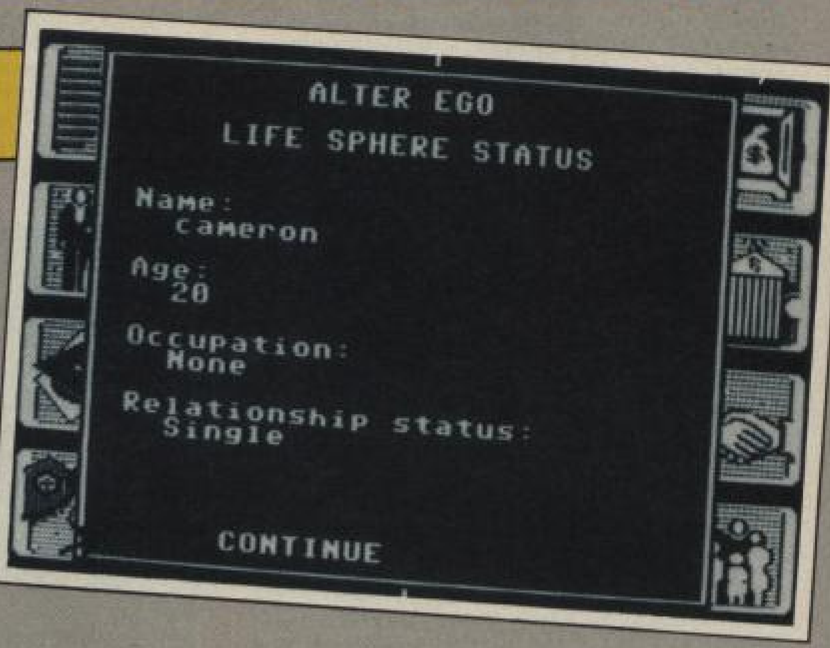
Alter Ego's innovative gameplay and excellent presentation was highly praised by all in May 1986, and it duly attained Gold Medal status. Many bags were witnessed upon many eyes as the reviewing team became thoroughly engrossed. Gary Penn classed it as 'one of the most addictive and compulsive games I have ever played'; Sean Masterson simply urged 'go out and buy it' and Julian displayed his enthusiasm and criminal tendencies by recommending that you 'beg, steal or borrow' it.

Everything about this game was (and is) amazing. The only fault was the inevitable limitations of memory, certain sections becoming familiar with continual playing. Even so, it's a classic.
GH

I'd go along with that. I remember playing it for hours and hours non-stop – it's incredibly compulsive.
JR

(Gordon) With the exception of lastability (a couple of marks lower) all the ratings were spot on.

(Jaz) I think that the hookability should be higher – it's instantly addictive – and the lastability should drop by a few points. Its in a class of its own.



Presentation 96%
Well produced, comprehensive instructions and excellent on-screen presentation.
Graphics N/A
Sound N/A
Hookability 98%
An enjoyable doddle to get into and easy to use.
Lastability 97%
When you're bored of life, you'll be bored of *Alter Ego*.
Value For Money 91%
Well, it IS quite expensive, but your life over again, and again, and again? Given that you have the money to spend, then it's well worth it.
Overall 98%
Original, unusual, compelling, varied . . . C'est La Vie!

PSI 5 TRADING COMPANY
US Gold

This unusual blend of strategy and shoot 'em up was almost rewarded with a Sizzler; Penn praised but Liddon and Rignall were more restrained. 'One of the best variations on the trading game theme I've played' opined Penn. Gary Liddon kept a grip on himself with 'I wasn't overly impressed', and Julian warned 'it might not appeal to arcade game players'.

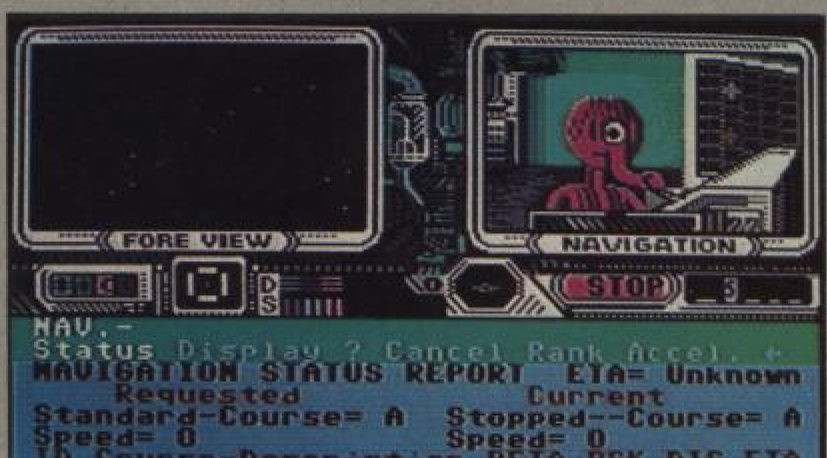
I played this for hours on end without making significant progress: perseverance paid, however, and its variety kept me going. It's still one of the more enjoyable strategy-based games around, but isn't recommended on cassette.
GH

Psi 5 never appealed to me, mainly because it requires too much playing before any enjoyment is gained. It's good looking and has plenty of depth, but is just too involved.
JR

(Gordon) Presentation and lastability should stay as they are, graphics, sound and hookability down by 10%, value down to 50% and overall about 75%. It only appeals if you're very patient.

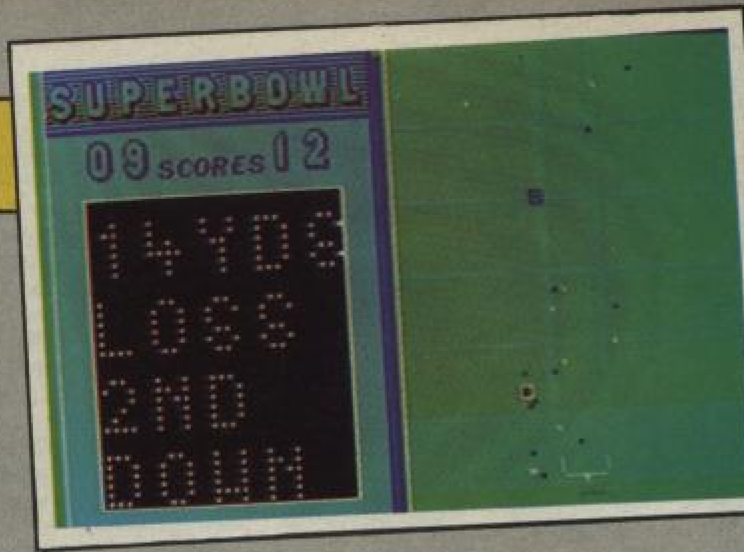
(Jaz) Overall should go down to about 80%. I still think strategy fans would find the game enjoyable. Hookability is definitely too high, and should drop by at least 15% – it's incredibly difficult to get into.





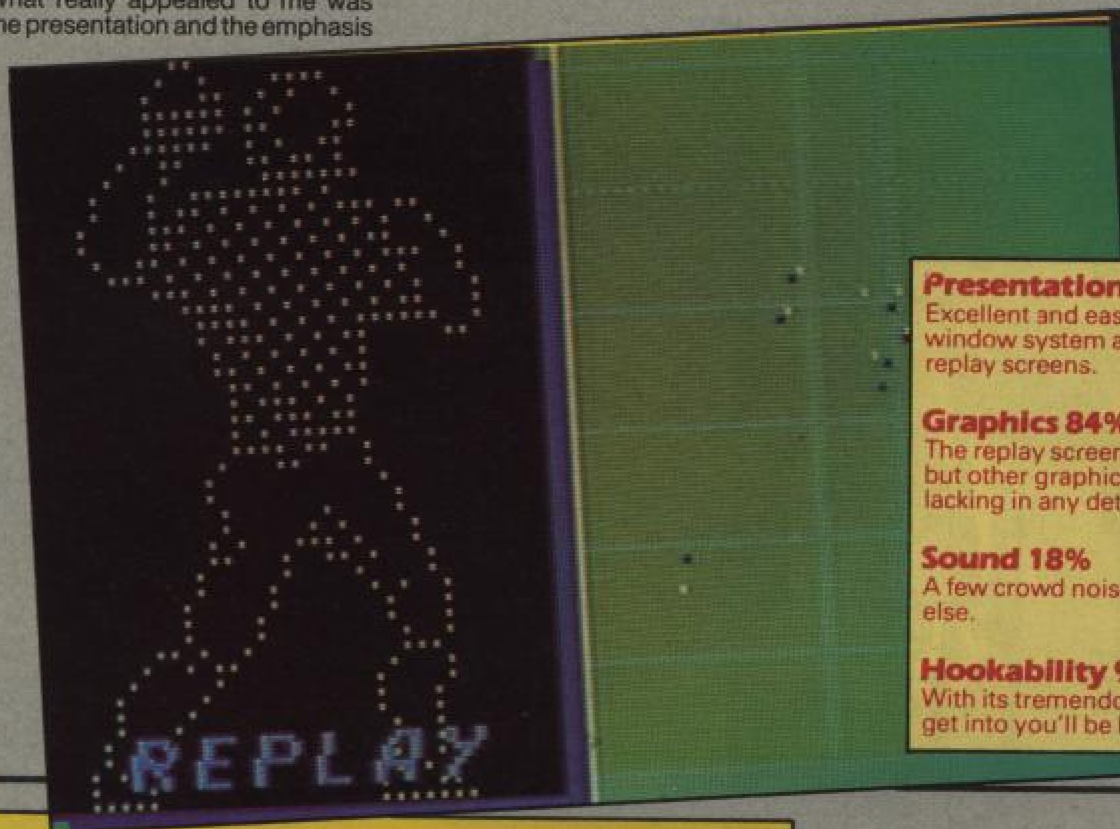
Presentation 81%
Well documented and attractively presented, but cassette loading is a pain.
Graphics 90%
Cartoon quality characters which are superbly animated.
Sound 74%
Variety of above average tunes help the game along adequately.
Hookability 88%
Initially enthralling and easy to get into.
Lastability 87%
Enough variety and depth to keep traders happy for a long while.
Value For Money 83%
Would benefit from being a bit cheaper.
Overall 88%
A great variation on the trading game theme.

SUPER BOWL
Ocean



Received to popular acclaim, Ocean's officially licensed Superbowl Simulator scraped into Sizzlerdom. Messrs Rignall and Sumner raved about it almost without exception: 'the ultimate American Football simulation' enthused the spiky-haired one; Paul paid tribute to its 'exciting fast action features' and proclaimed it 'definitely worth the wait'.

What really appealed to me was the presentation and the emphasis on *playing* moves – previous games had been more strategy-oriented. However, the standard set here has been easily surpassed by programs like *4th & Inches*: it deserves less attention now.
GH



Compared to *4th & Inches*, *Super Bowl* looks decidedly crummy. The giant replay screens are superb, but the field and players are pitifully poor. It's very playable, but badly flawed – as we found out later.
JR

(Gordon) All the marks down by about 20-25%, except for presentation and sound, which are about right. It was good for its time, but . . .

(Jaz) Graphics down by 25%, hook and lastability down by 30%, and overall down to low seventies – it has aged very badly indeed.

Presentation 98%
Excellent and easy to use window system and brilliant replay screens.

Graphics 84%
The replay screens are ace but other graphics are rather lacking in any detail.

Sound 18%
A few crowd noises and little else.

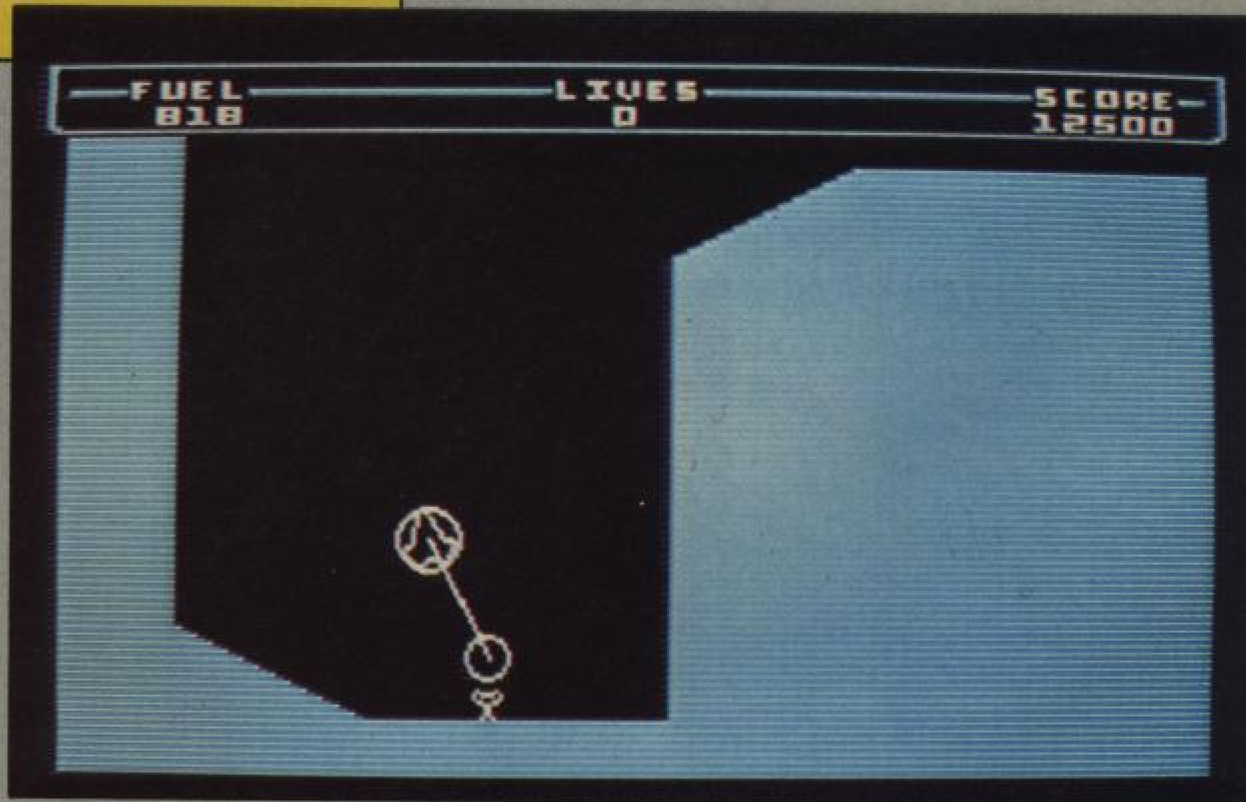
Hookability 92%
With its tremendous ease to get into you'll be hooked from kick-off.

Lastability 89%
The computer team is rather easy to beat but the two player option is where the game scores highest.

Value For Money 87%
It's cheaper than travelling to the Superbowl. . . .

Overall 90%
and just as much fun as the real thing.

THRUST
Firebird



Simplistic graphics failed to discourage the ZZAP! team, the terrible triplets Liddon, Penn and Rignall wailing and gnashing their teeth in ecstacy. The two Garys hailed it as 'virtually flawless', 'a steal at only two quid' and 'immensely playable', whereas Jazza simply ejaculated 'one of the most addictive and playable arcade games I've played in a long time'.

Thrust is one of my all-time favourite games: it just goes to show that the best ideas are brilliantly simple. The graphics are terrible but the gameplay is a perfect combination of realistic inertia, graded landscapes and blasting action.
GH

Like a fine wine, *Thrust* gets better with age. It's incredibly playable, and just goes to illustrate what you can do if you concentrate more on the gameplay than the graphics.
JR

(Gordon) Presentation down to 80%, graphics down to 40%, sound, hookability, lastability and value are fine: overall increased to 97%! It's a classic Commodore game . . .

(Jaz) Our review copy had a corrupted title tune, so the sound rating was far lower than it should have been – 94% seems more befitting. The graphics should drop to 50%, lastability up by 3% and overall up to 97%. Looking back, I think we underrated it!

Presentation 88%
Handy little demo mode and high score table, but no joystick option.

Graphics 80%
Though somewhat dated looking, movement is the main graphic attraction.

Sound 80%
Rob 'I get everywhere' Hubbard supplied the annoying main screen ditty, but befitting FX make up for this.

Hookability 92%
A good Thrusting is great fun and it's all very easy to get into.

Lastability 94%
The very cleverly graded screens means that it will need a momentous amount of skill to stop *Thrust* from offering a challenge.

Value For Money 99%
Games of this quality just aren't usually offered for a ridiculously low price like this.

Overall 94%
Most enjoyable game we've played for ages and at the price you'd be silly to miss it.

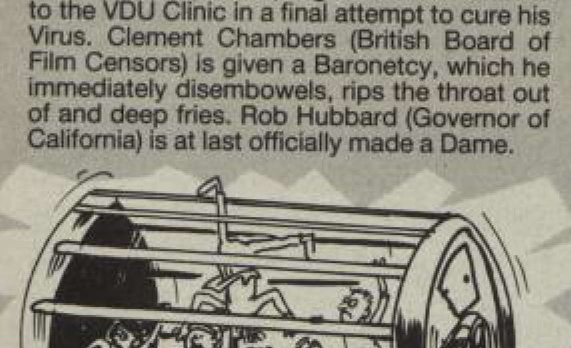
HACK TO THE FUTURE

One hundred and forty months to go until the end of the decade, the end of the century, the end of the millenium, the end of the world? Mr Croucher casts his runes and unscrambles the steaming entrails to predict the shape of things to come . . .

1991

JANUARY

The New Year's Honours list reflects British computing. Jeff Minter (the new boss of Activision) is given a night-hood, but refuses to wear it. Dean Barrett (Commodore's telephone switchboard operator) is given a season ticket to the VDU Clinic in a final attempt to cure his Virus. Clement Chambers (British Board of Film Censors) is given a Baronetcy, which he immediately disembowels, rips the throat out of and deep fries. Rob Hubbard (Governor of California) is at last officially made a Dame.



FEBRUARY

Prime Minister, Maggot Hatcher, and Minister of Extra-marital Energy, Cecil Porkinson, commence the privatisation of electricity. The CEGB is split into two power companies plus a 12-region distribution company. This marks the beginning of the end for nuclear energy in Britain because nobody in their right mind will invest in loony, lethal, expensive generators. A massive youth employment scheme is inaugurated for everyone between the ages of 16 and 21, which solves the nuclear power shortfall and unemployment at a stroke. It is called 'Treadmills'.

MARCH

Julian Rignall is arrested for subversion when the Census Computer discovers that he is an anagram of 'IRA Gunn Jaill'. The super-molecular processor is perfected after research begun in 1987. Using organic three-dimensional computer circuits, a new generation of hybrid structures for biological sensors becomes available for medical and military usage. Members of the Stock Exchange rush to fit the new modules in their underpants, thereby linking the Dow Jones One Hundred Share index directly to wetting themselves.



APRIL

For security reasons, the Government Central Computer is linked to Immigration Passport Control and to all data bases that deal with shareholdings, credit card transactions and teleshopping networks. DHSS, Police and Vehicle Licensing computers have been linked to the system since 1990, and it is now possible to monitor the movements of people and money with 95% accuracy. The other 5% still run the Government. Julian Rignall is released after it is found that his name is really an anagram for the choreography of a Bananarama video, 'Run-Lala-Jig-Nil'.

MAY

The Computerised Car Navigation Network (CCNN) is launched, based on a ten-year-old German concept. This comprises matchbox-sized low-cost dashboard transmitters in cars, miniaturised location beacons at every road sign, automatic traffic information broadcasts via car radios, and satellite system control. The Central Computer is now able to monitor vehicle movements plus or minus 100 metres. A 69-mile traffic jam forms on the M1, as hedgehogs are spotted at motorway junctions with dashboard scramblers in their paws and wicked grins on their faces.

JUNE

At the ZX81 Tenth Anniversary Celebrations – held on a trestle table in a Cambridge soup kitchen – the Reverend Ian Paisley accuses the assembled programmers of being 'a bunch of One-kayers!' It is confirmed that the panda is now extinct in the wild, as is the freelance computer programmer, the independent software house, 'Your Commodore' and my overdraft.

JULY

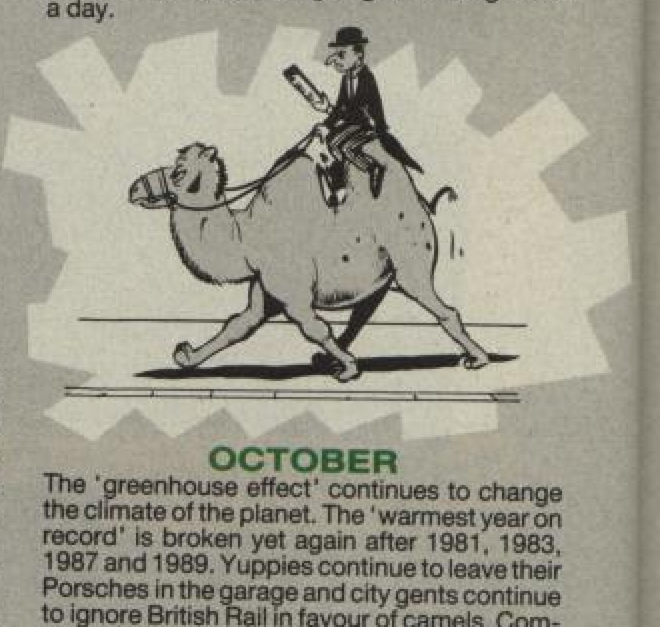
The British Organisation of Nursing Kamikazes (BONK) introduces a private screening service for AIDS. Credit card sized passes are issued every month for anyone clear of the virus, and immediately become recognised by insurance companies, private blood banks, the St John's Ambulance Brigade, Milwall FC Supporters and the Boy Scouts. Robert Maxwell buys everything in the previous sentence after the word 'by'. Wendy the singing computer is appointed editress of ZZAP! 64, when Rignall admits that his name is really a sick note reading, 'JR nul: ill again!'. Due to cut backs, Level 9 are rechristened 'A Couple of Hillocks'.

AUGUST

Droughts, uncollected garbage and the release of Wendy the singing computer's latest single form the backdrop to the worst inner-city riots since July 1991. The Government introduces compulsory baton rounds and baton charges. This means that everyone takes it in turn to get beaten up, and then gets charged for their injuries by direct debit. US Gold buys the rights to the game.

SEPTEMBER

Under the 1988 Clause 28/29 legislation, electronic tagging is introduced to monitor the movements of 'convicted homosexuals'. Most schoolchildren and geriatrics are already tagged by computer monitoring, for 'reasons of their own safety'. The Poll Tax is finally introduced whereby barbers, flag erectors, lopped trees, anyone with the surname Gallup and all parrots have to pay for going to the bog twice a day.



OCTOBER

The 'greenhouse effect' continues to change the climate of the planet. The 'warmest year on record' is broken yet again after 1981, 1983, 1987 and 1989. Yuppies continue to leave their Porsches in the garage and city gents continue to ignore British Rail in favour of camels. Computerised predictions confirm that because of the greenhouse effect, by the end of the century most of the population will consist of little old men in cloth caps, living in glass houses and not throwing stones. Militant greenfly surround the Met Office and demand the head of Ian MacGaskill.

NOVEMBER

Ian Botham walks around the world for charity, riding Grand Slam supremo Stephen Hall. Low-lying areas sink by several feet. A revolutionary data retrieval system storms the market, measuring only five by seven inches, weighing less than 500 grammes, containing 256K of ROM and almost infinite RAM, with several languages on board and costing less than a fiver. It is codenamed 'A Book'.

DECEMBER

Government cuts affect the panto season with disastrous results. Children are forced to watch 'economically efficient' productions such as 'Skinhead and the Bear', 'Ali Ba and the Double-glazing Salesman', 'One or Two Dalmations', 'Off White and the Quite Short Person' etc. During the Queen's Christmas Broadcast, several viewers think that they can detect a three-core flex snaking up the leg of Prince Edward, and a 13-amp plug bulging from his trouser pocket. Meanwhile, Wendy the singing computer is reported to be 'less than 100% non-pregnant'.

1992

JANUARY

The Single European Act becomes law, hurling Britain into a Europe without frontiers of 332 million electronically consuming citizens. Great new trading opportunities are grasped by the computer industry, as tax-free Schneider computers blow Amstrad away, Spanish cassettes and Italian floppies flood the market and Ludlow declares itself a Republic. The new European 'purple' passport contains a magnetic strip on which is encoded





details of the holder. All immigrants are now bar-coded. Mel Croucher is refused re-entry to Britain under the Food and Drugs Act because, when his lounge bar-code is read by Immigration Control, the words 'best before 1968' appear.

FEBRUARY

Ocean boss, Sir David Ward, is mobbed by Dan Dare fans, who mistake him for The Mekon. Domark boss, Alicippe Castaneceps , is mobbed by Dr David Owen, who mistakes him for the SDP. Code Pensioners' boss, Wendy 'n' Wendy Darling, is mobbed by budget fans, who mistake him for a programmer.

MARCH

Wendy the singing computer gives birth to several thousand micros, and vows to devote her life to good works and Cliff Richard. Graffiti artists are accused of destroying the ozone layer by overuse of spray cans. The maximum rate of Income Tax is reduced to 20%, and tax exile multi-millionaires like Fergus MacNeil, Ronnie & Reggie Frey and PacMan return to the UK.

APRIL

The Central Computer is now able to tap all telecommunications in the UK, including closed user group bulletin boards. This is achieved by flashing a red alert whenever subversive key words are spoken or electronically transmitted. Terrorists are identified and sent to camps after using such words as 'assassination', 'nail-bomb', 'rates rebate' and 'Yale'. Whereas users of words like 'T'Pau', 'The James Last Orchestra', 'Defergel' and 'Tim Langdell' are sent to mental hospitals.

MAY

Senator Edward Kennedy and Governor Clint Eastwood gain the Democratic nomination in the US Presidential elections. Preprogrammed 'threshold' computers are installed in all major economic trading centres, in order to avoid a repeat of the 1987 computerised stock market crash. On the same day, after the worst stock market crash since the last stock market crash, Japan announces sweeping economic reforms, and the New Yen takes over from the Dollar as the world's standard unit of currency. The American Empire (1945 to 1990) was one of the shortest in history.

JUNE

With negotiations well under way for the removal of the Berlin wall, the Minister of Supply, Mr Arthur Daley, arranges to have it shipped to Northern Ireland, where the Belfast Wall is looking a bit seedy after 15 years. With leprechauns on one side and orange men on the other, the stage is set for peace. Unfortunately, several hundred Ulster children rip up the wall and throw it at the army.

JULY

President Bush and First Secretary Gorbachev sign the draft agreement to reduce long range nuclear weapons by a further 50%. It is now the declared intention of the superpowers to eliminate nukes by the year 2000, for economic reasons. The United States/USSR alliance and the EEC/Japanese alliance begins the redrawing of the global map.

AUGUST

Saint Wendy the singing computer wins more gold medals at the Barcelona Olympics than any other country, and vows to devote her life to insulting mainframes and Cliff Richard.

SEPTEMBER

At the annual Personal Computer Show, the traditional software house carve-up is organised along the lines of a birthday party. Everyone in the industry is issued with a Lucky Bag containing some soft soap, a knife, a back, two faces, a divorce lawyer and a pile of bovine excrement. They all proceed to play Blind Man's Bluff, Musical Chairs and Cheque's-in-the-Postman's Knock. There are no winners, as usual.

OCTOBER

Cliff Richard and Wendy the singing computer get to Number One with 'Livin' Doll'. Teenage Autumn fashions consist of wearing a monitor case over the head and washing very thoroughly. With less than five years before the handing back of Hong Kong to China, there are riots in the colony as well as in London and Liverpool, when it is announced that the 5 million Hong Kong citizens are to lose their right of entry into Britain. US Gold buys the rights to the game.

NOVEMBER

Islamic fundamentalists overthrow the Saudi Arabian royal family while they are away attending the Bruce Everiss Memorial Handicap at Goodwood race track. US Gold buys the rights to the game.

DECEMBER

The Sony Global Interactive Entertainment Network comes on stream. Using a network of communication satellites, total domestic control is achieved. Anyone can now watch 'Endurance' 24 hours a day, order a take-away sushi or buy a factory in Northumberland without leaving their foam-filled armchair.

Sorry about this, an amazingly obscure smartassed Croucher-type joke. 'Alicippe Castaneceps' is the bird-watchers' name for the Chestnut-headed tit-babbler.

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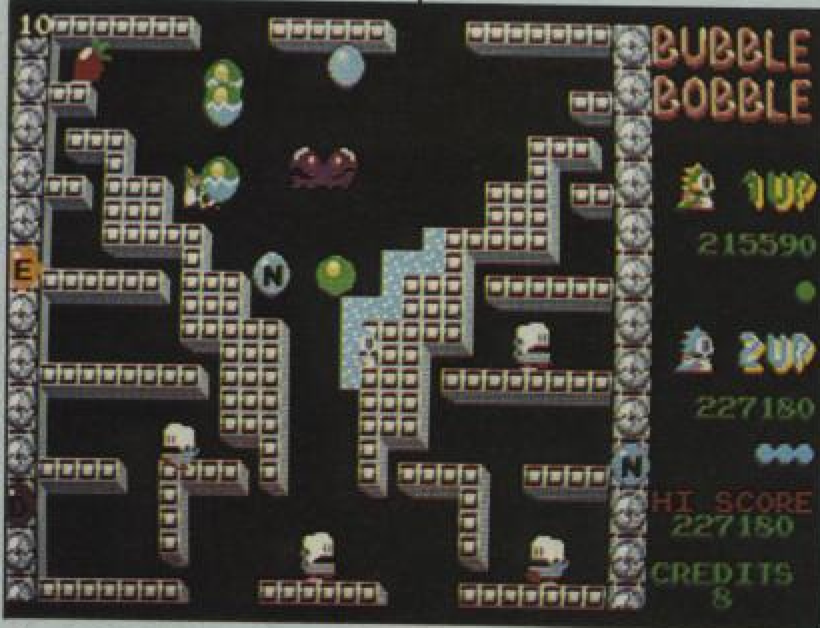
This month's grouping of the great and the gruesome has only one outstanding game on offer: Firebird's conversion of *Bubble Bobble*. It's virtually identical to the arcade version, although the music isn't quite as good as it should be. The gameplay is the same: a brilliant combination of addictive platform action and cute characters, with plenty of surprise features to be discovered. Graphically it's impressive – considering the game's simplicity – and although it doesn't fully exploit its potential, it's still worthy of any Amiga owner's attention.

Garrison II adopts the *Gauntlet* format without improving on it. Surprisingly, the sprites are uninspiring and poorly animated, the levels scroll slowly and jerkily and the sound is very basic. It's by no means terrible, but it's worth waiting for US Gold's officially licensed version of *Gauntlet II* to provide some comparison.

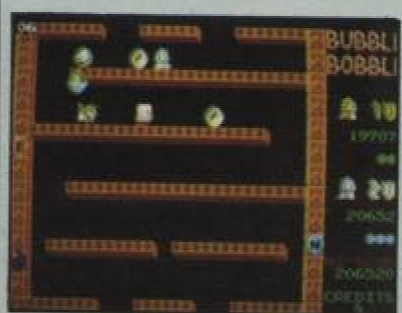
The latest Psygnosis game pits their customary high graphical standards against flawed gameplay. The basic gripe is the sluggish response time of the main character – resulting in great frustration in tricky situations – and the equally laborious screen push-scrolling. The ease of gameplay only compounds the fault: *Obliterator* offers little more than an evening's entertainment.

From Linel comes *Crack*, the most recent addition to the senile *Breakout* genre. With 150 game screens and a 700 level construction set there's certainly enough action, but the repetitive and unchallenging gameplay repels addiction long before then. Still, it's a humorous approach to a dated concept, and well worth a look for some of the crispest and most entertaining Amiga game sound yet.

Strike Force Harrier makes the leap from the 8-bit formats with ease, but still doesn't provide enough variety to guarantee interest. Neat effects such as fading clouds and detailed ground features are marred by the inherent simplicity of the action. If you've got *Jet*, you won't want this: wait for *Interceptor* instead.

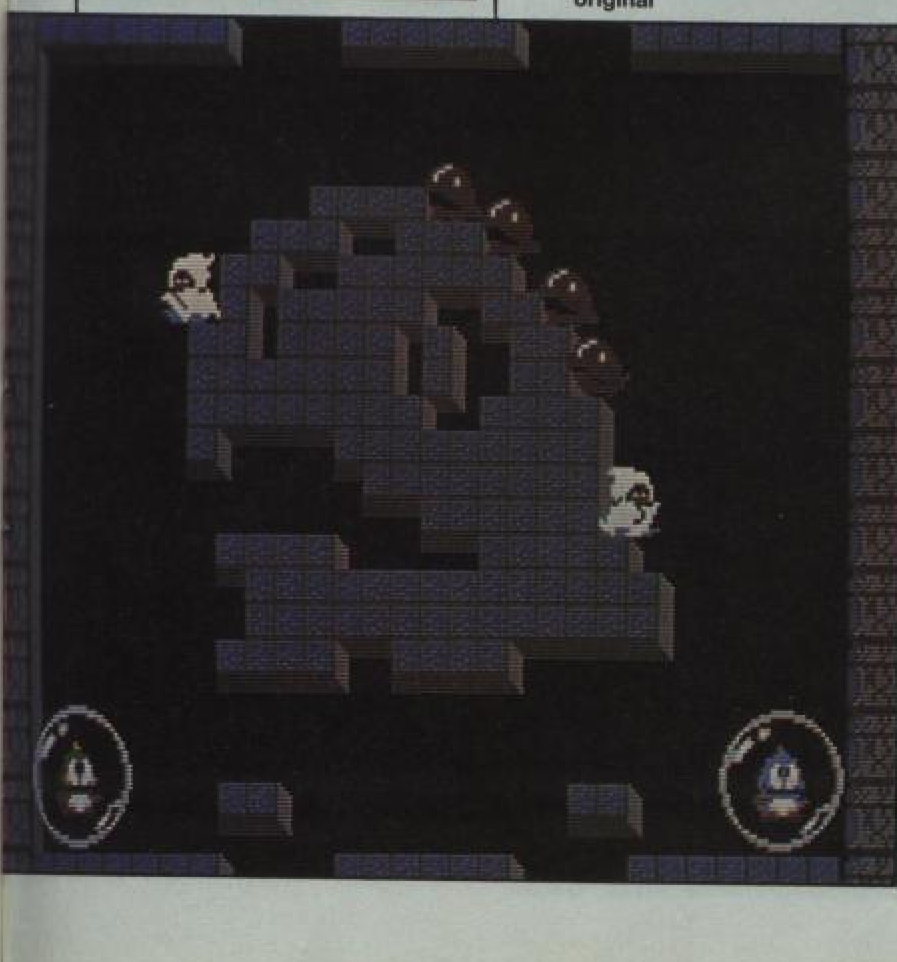


▲ Bub 'n' Bob: the two bubble-blowing Brontosaus . . .



◀ Forever blowing bubbles . . .

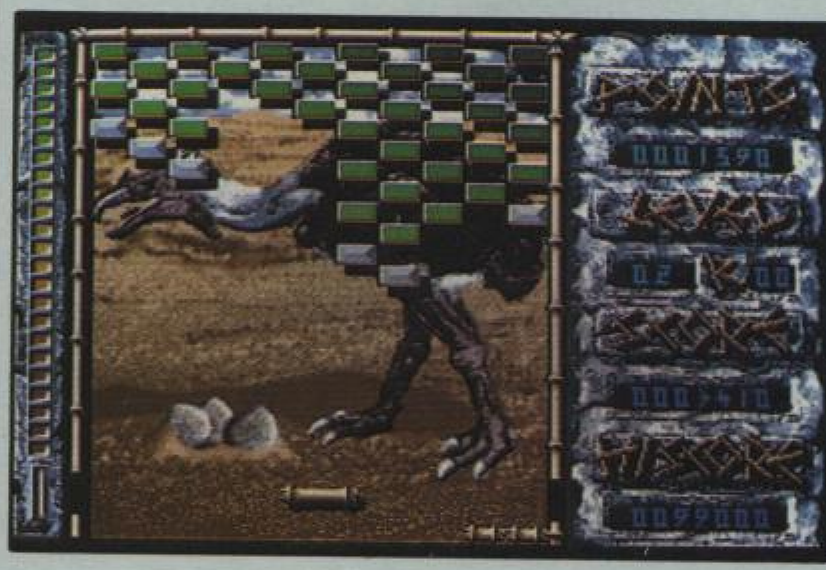
▼ Firebird's *Bubble Bobble* is incredibly faithful to the arcade original



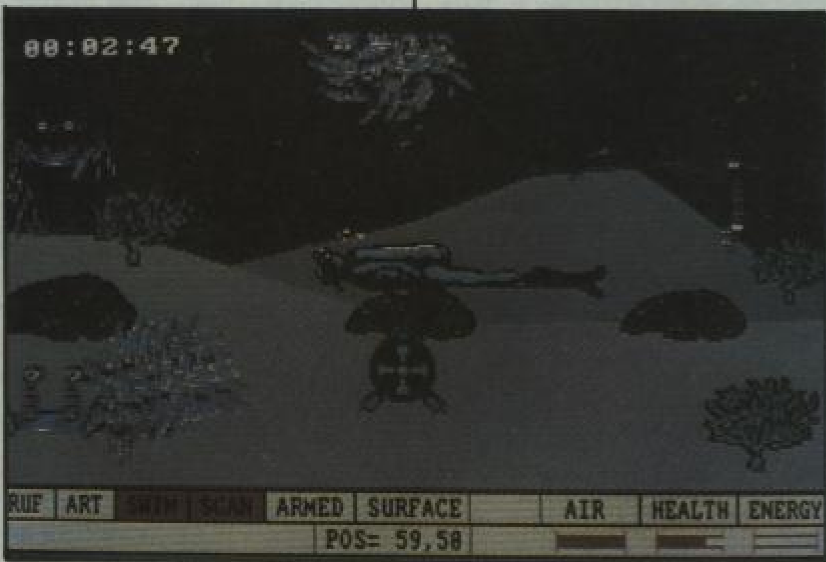


▲ *Crack*: gorgeous graphics, amazing sound, but poor gameplay

▼ Bash those bricks . . .



Very much inspired by the Bond movies, Electronic Arts' *Return to Atlantis* boasts a combination of RPG and arcade action across 14 missions. However, the tasks don't differ significantly during play, and there's some pretty irksome disk swapping – otherwise it's another average addition to the Amiga range.

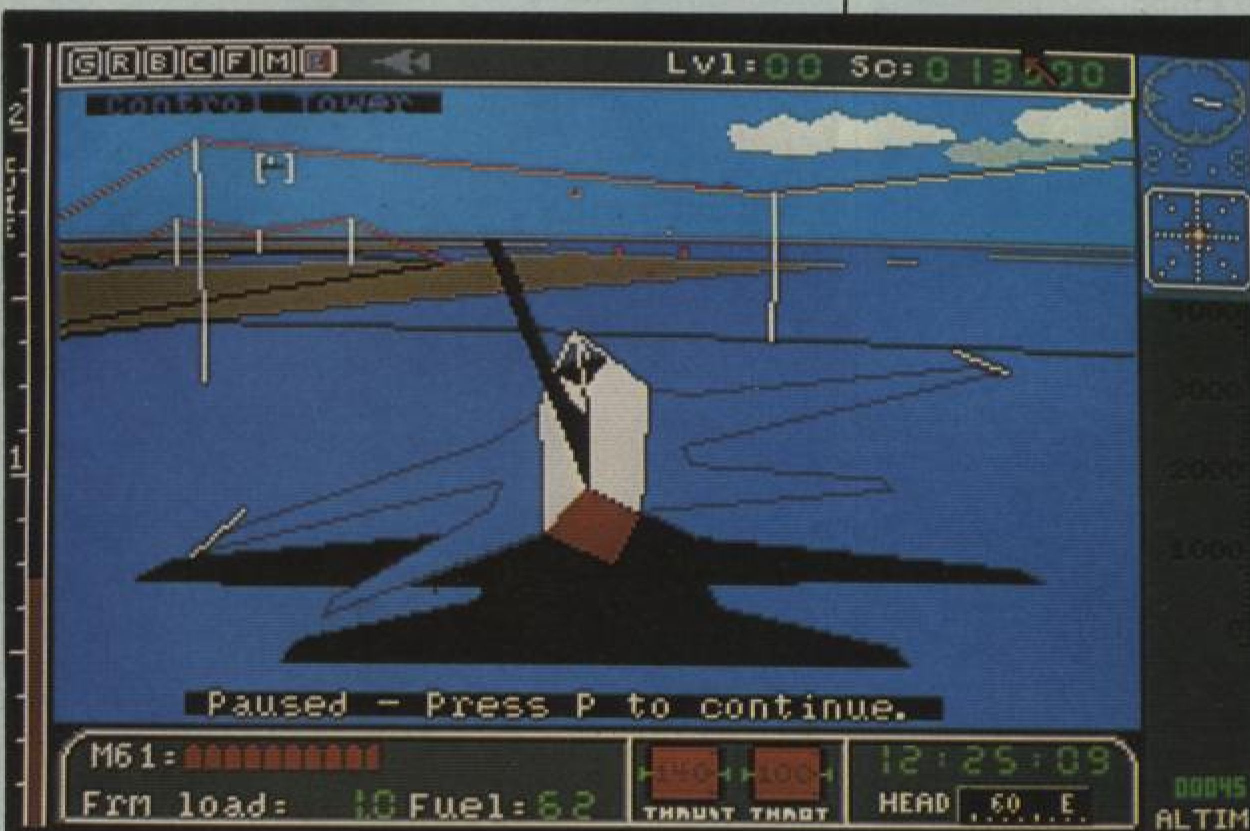


▲ ***Return to Atlantis*: a nice idea ruined by its implementation**

Air combat fans are well catered for with *Jet*, Sublogic's latest filled-3D flight simulator. The player takes control of either an F-16 or F-18 jet and flies three different missions: intercept and shoot down enemy MiGs, a nighttime ground attack and a daytime ground attack with a MiG threat. The fourth scenario is a free-flight option, which allows the pilot to fly his plane without threat. The graphics are incredible, with fast and convincing 3D update, the digitised effects are superb, and there are plenty of neat touches, but at £40 it's very expensive – especially as there are only four missions. *Jet* is compatible with *Flight Sim II* scenery disks, allowing you to burn around Cape Canaveral or across Mid West America, but we recommend you wait for *Interceptor* before deciding to buy.



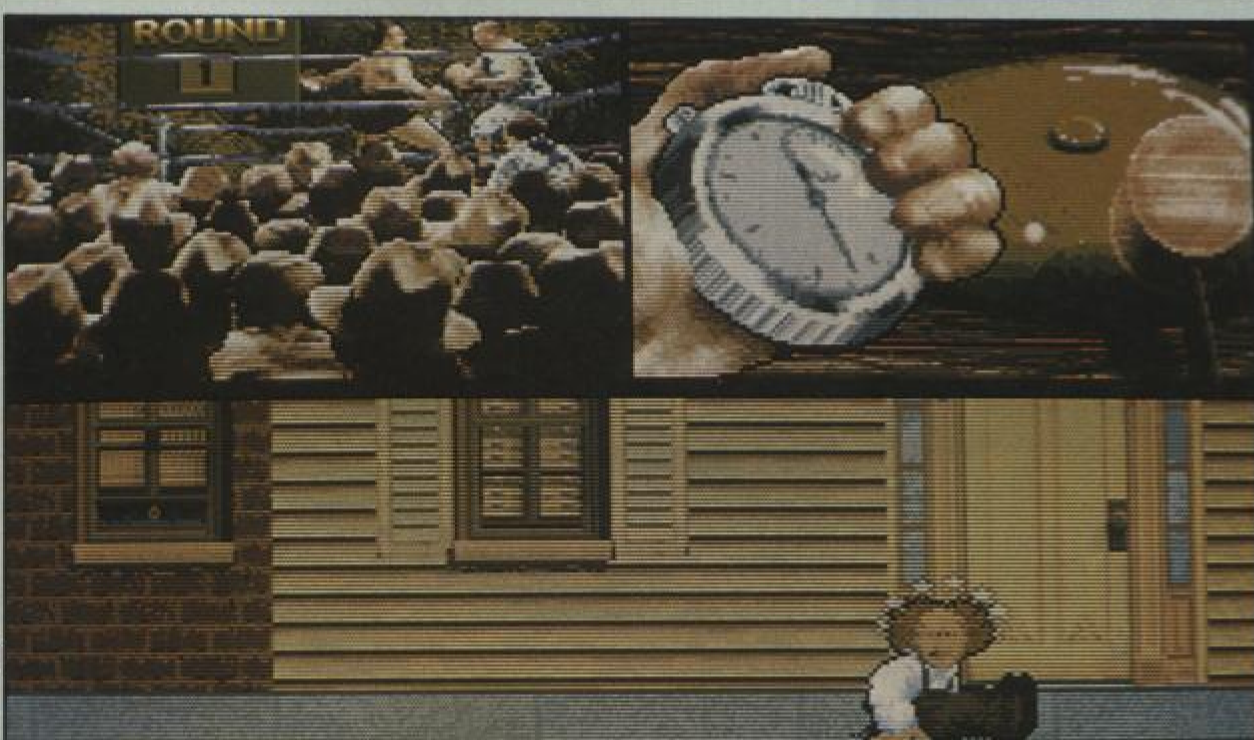
▲ **Can Moe, Larry and Curly save the orphanage?**



◄ **The incredible graphics and sound are let down by the lack of missions**



The last game this month is Mirrorsoft's long-awaited *The Three Stooges*. Excellent speech and superb digitised graphics are set across a boardgame format, split into a series of sub-games in which the three buffoons attempt to earn enough money to save an orphanage. In practice these sub-games are far too simple – consisting of horizontally and vertically scrolling dodge games, a trivia quiz, pie-throwing and fighting – and the slow disk access and the frustrating inter-game sequences soon make for tedious gameplay. The action is far from challenging, and it's incredibly easy to complete the game – and after that there's nothing to draw you back. At £30 *The Three Stooges* is a very overpriced disappointment.



◄ ***The Three Stooges* boasts some lovely graphics and excellent digitised sound**


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VENOM STRIKES BACK

Gremlin Graphics, £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk, joystick with keys

Miles Mayhem and the evil forces of VENOM continue their war of attrition against the MASK team by kidnapping Matt Trakker's son, Scott. Threatening to kill him unless Trakker leaves MASK, Mayhem believes that without their leader, MASK would provide little opposition towards VENOM and their aspirations of world domination.

Trakker immediately begins the hunt for his son by scanning for the homing transmitter hidden in his clothes. MASK's satellite system quickly finds the boy in a new VENOM base on the dark side of the moon, a location impossible to reach because MASK has no space vehicles. Trakker's only option is to infiltrate a VENOM installation and steal one of their spacecraft.

The player takes control of Trakker as he lands in the VENOM base. The screen is split horizontally, with the upper portion showing a horizontally scrolling view of the terrain upon which Trakker runs, jumps and crouches. The hazardous landscape holds wide gorges, disappearing bridges, mines and missile emplacements, and the MASKed man is also constantly beset by VENOM robot guards which descend from the sky, slowly depleting his stamina upon contact.

Trakker picks up and carries up to four masks, awarding him with special abilities, including extra weaponry, flight and a Healer mask which restores lost stamina.

At the end of each level lies a VENOM mega weapon which stands sentry over the exit. These are avoided or destroyed as necessary and increase in potency until VENOM's ultimate weapon is reached: a huge, automated and seemingly invincible Serpent.



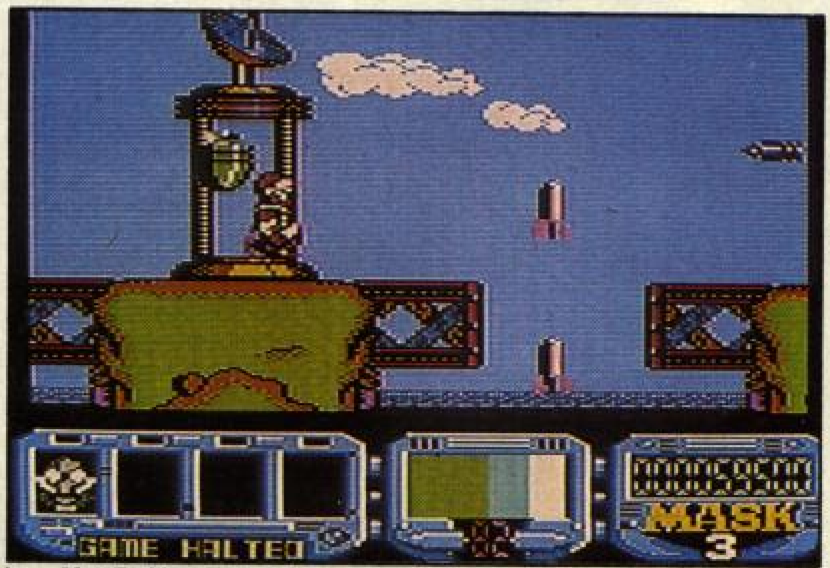
With the MASK II **disaster still fresh in my mind, I loaded** VENOM Strikes Back **expecting the worst. After a few goes I was pleasantly surprised to find a colourful and playable platform game. The action is nicely graded, and the intelligent use of passwords means that once you conquer the early levels, you're not forced to play them time and time again. The graphics are very good, consisting of large, nicely drawn sprites and colourful backdrops, and the sound is very suitable. In fact, the only thing I find annoying is the ropey collision detection at the edge of some platforms – Matt occasionally slides off for no apparent reason. Otherwise** VENOM Strikes Back **is a good looking and thoughtfully put together program which should go down well with the** MASK **fans.**



The third in the MASK **series is the best yet, but it still needs to go some way to achieve a high accolade. The graphics are typically Gremlin, owing much to** Future Knight, **just as the music is reminiscent of** Rebounder; **however, the result of this unoriginal mish-mash is a decent game. Each level provides a fresh challenge – almost a puzzle – as you try to work out what to do with an oncoming missile or a spiky bouncing bomb, and each is characterised by its own kind of landscape. The use of code words is a feature which stretches the lastability, since the first levels can be very frustrating. The major reason is the busy on-screen action: some missiles are simply impossible to avoid. However, if you're looking for a cartoon-quality conversion with a wide range of opponents,** VENOM Strikes Back **is a fair purchase.**



I have to admit, after previous MASK games, I didn't have high hopes for VENOM Strikes Back, **so it came as a nice surprise to find that the game isn't too bad at all. The simplistic combination of platform and shoot 'em up action is at first quite compelling, with large, colourful graphics creating a suitably knockabout cartoon atmosphere. The variety of abilities proffered by the extra masks is also pleasing – not just a faster weapon and speed-up for once. Unfortunately, the game is not without its flaws and when they start to creep in, interest begins to wane. The program is often unsure whether the player is on a platform or not, and a watery grave often rewards an apparently successful jump. It's also a pity that the action doesn't vary between games, since after a few runs to level four, thrills prove to be thin on the ground.**



Matt Trakker confronts a constant hail of trouble in an attempt to rescue his son



A retractable missile launcher descends from the roof, unleashing a deadly projectile . . .

PRESENTATION 67%
No highscore table, but joystick/keyboard options and a code word feature compensate to some extent.

GRAPHICS 75%
Large, smooth and colourful.

SOUND 52%
Bouncy but uninspiring tune and adequate spot effects.

HOOKABILITY 73%
Unsophisticated blasting and jumping action is very easy to get into.

LASTABILITY 61%
It's challenging, but some of the appeal is lost because of the similarity between games.

OVERALL 70%
The best MASK game so far, and a pretty good game in its own right.

ZZAP! TEST

SIZZLER

ALIEN SYNDROME

The Edge, £9.99 cass, £11.99 disk, joystick with keys

●The Edge's gripping and atmospheric conversion of the gruesome Sega coin-op

Aliens have invaded a colony in deepest space and are poised to devour a group of Earth scientists. Veteran alien exterminators, Mary and Ricky have been assigned to the mission of infiltrating the colony and rescuing the prisoners.

Each of the seven multiloaded levels offers solo or dual player combat in a maze of corridors and rooms in which the scientists are hidden. The levels push-scroll in eight directions and the action is viewed from overhead, *Gauntlet* style. Doors are opened simply by firing at them, and falling off platforms results in the loss of one of five lives.



An information panel at the top of the playing area reveals both players' scores and the top score, the number of lives remaining and scientists to rescue, plus a timer. Points are awarded for destroying aliens and collecting scientists, and bonus points are given according to the amount of time remaining. A siren warns the player of the last ten seconds, but should the time run down before all scientists are collected, the ship explodes and the game ends.

Seven kinds of alien – each type unique to a level – patrol the colony, relentlessly seeking out the player. These include wriggling worms who appear out of the ground, huge, squirming maggot-like creatures and green bug-eyed hoppers. Contact with any of these or their emissions results in the loss of a life, although the currently held weapon remains intact.

A range of armaments is available to both players: at the start of the first level they are equipped with short-range guns, but additional weaponry is collected from store cupboards dotted around the colony. Extra equipment includes bombs (destroying only the area where they land), fire bombs (killing all in their path), a flamethrower (short-range but effective) and a laser (a long range, rapid-fire blaster).

The reputation the arcade Alien Syndrome **gained for some of the most gruesome aliens around has been well respected by the programmers of this conversion. Each well-designed level is packed with some of the most bug-eyed monsters you could coax out of a set of VIC chips. The real treat, however, is when you come face to face with the end of level creatures – they're all highly imaginative beasts, particularly the Asophy and Minenor monsters. Of course the fun lies in reducing them all to heaps of offal, and the artillery provided is suitably powerful for the job, as well as being easy to access. It's a pity that the gratuitous blasting action is slowed slightly by the rate of screen scrolling. The game uses a strange push-scrolling method, which moves the screen slower than the player can walk, so in a fit of impatience it's possible to move straight into an alien entering the display. Luckily this is easily compensated for, and it doesn't detract much from an otherwise exceptional bit of blasting.**

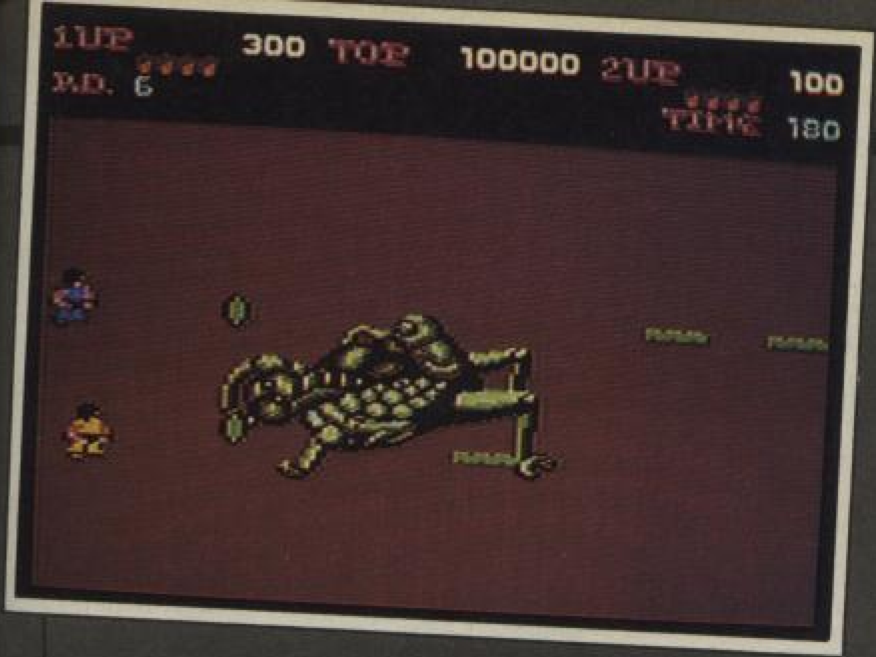
▼ When an alien makes eyes at you, it's time to run

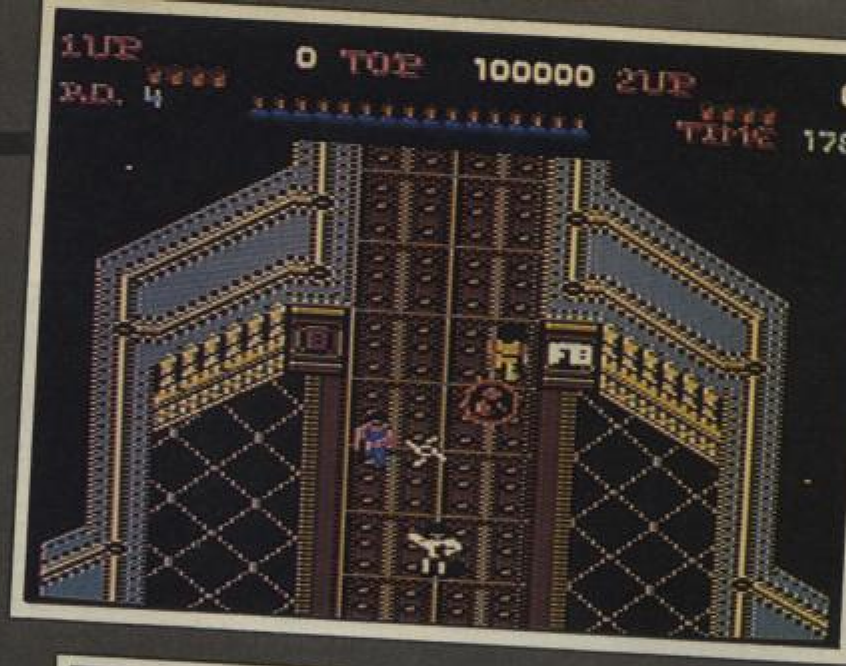




The arcade version of Alien Syndrome **is simply brilliant, and this conversion manages to capture all the original atmosphere and spirit. The sprites are excellent, and the backdrops are amazingly similar to the arcade version, ranging from strange, organic growths, through an alien rock type backdrop to the sterile atmosphere of a space hospital. The conversion doesn't just look like the original, it also plays like it. It's basically a** Gauntlet**-style game, but is much more frenetic as you rush around a series of sinister landscapes pursued by some of the most horrid aliens I've seen in a computer game. Inducing even more panic is the very tight time limit, which puts you under severe pressure as you attempt to rescue the prisoners before the time-bomb explodes. Best of all are the thoroughly revolting end-of-level guardians – especially Asophy. Each is superbly drawn and animated, and form a tremendous final barrier – defeat it and you really feel you've won a last battle! The sound effects aren't too bad, but I don't like the soundtrack – it's very inappropriate. Why not use the same tense and atmospheric 'heartbeat' soundtrack of the original? One big complaint is that the screen doesn't scroll fast enough, and you have to keep stopping to let it catch up with you (otherwise you get too near the edge and get killed by an alien). If you can put up with this, you should thoroughly enjoy** Alien Syndrome**.**

Maps are accessed in each section, detailing the location and number of scientists still to be rescued. Once all the humans are saved from the alien horde an exit is activated, to which the player heads before the time limit expires. Once this is reached, the player tackles an end-of-level mother alien, which is destroyed, again within a time limit. These larger aliens increase in strength and ability according to the level and require a multitude of bullets to destroy; once they have been annihilated, the next section is entered.





The attention paid to recreating the tense atmosphere and alien detail of the coin-op original has clearly paid off. Graphically, *Alien Syndrome* is highly polished: the backdrops are superb, ranging from the beautifully shaded globular effect of level three to the gorgeous marbled effect of level seven. Both main sprites are compact and clearly drawn, and the aliens are very impressive: each type is designed to combine sinister movement and repulsiveness. The animation on the end of level nasties is generally good, and some are outstanding (just watch out for the spider-like monster if you don't believe me). The gameplay is excellent: the basic *Gauntlet* style action is enhanced by the hazardous terrain, waves of horrible aliens and a strict time limit – the effect of running for the exit with a siren blaring away is brilliant! The only drawback is the scrolling, which moves at a marginally slower rate than the character: ignore this fault and experience a superbly designed and highly addictive conversion.





▲ Admire the marble floor – but don't sniff the flora

▼ Catch 22: provoke this end-of-level horror and you'll probably die; don't and you'll die anyway



PRESENTATION 92%
One/two-player option, speedy multiload and large screen display.

GRAPHICS 90%
Varied, detailed and colourful backdrops plus compact and neatly animated sprites create a convincing alien feel.

SOUND 72%
Option of music and sound effects, both of which are polished.

HOOKABILITY 92%
The combination of time limit, exploration and furious blasting action proves immediately addictive.

LASTABILITY 82%
Clearing the levels is by no means easy, particularly in one-player mode, and the end of level nasties provide added lasting challenge.

OVERALL 90%
An excellent version of the coin-op guaranteed to provide hours of enjoyment and frustration.

MICROLEAGUE WRESTLING

Microprose, £14.95 disk only, joystick, keys and Commodore Mouse

Forget the Saturday afternoon Brit wrestlers – the real stagers of the business are the Americans! **Microleague Wrestling** features Hulk Hogan and other stars of the Stateside ring in a simulated contest for the World Wrestling Federation Championship belt.

Upon loading, the player selects a control method, which of the three wrestlers he wants to play, and the length of the match, from a ten minute tussle, to an hour-long 'Grudge' match. This is where the wrestlers not only want to win, they also want to inflict as much pain as possible on their opponent.

As part of the pre-match build-up, the game loads digitised interview sequences between 'Mean Gene' Okerlund and each wrestler, in which each mat-man tells anyone who can be bothered to listen, how much better they are than the others. The screen then switches to the ringside where the Master of Ceremonies announces the match and introduces the contenders.

The bell then sounds to start the action. Instead of having direct joystick control over each wrestler, the player controls a selector bar with which he chooses his moves from a menu unique to each contestant. The menu carries four categories of move, from Basic moves (punches and stomps) to a wrestler's specialist manoeuvre, each of which carry a trade-off between ease of use and effectiveness in terms of damage points. When both have chosen their next move, the computer decides which of the two would be more successful, taking into account the level of damage the wrestlers have already sustained, their 'Relative Dominance' and the probability of successfully completing that move.

To represent their progress in the match, both wrestlers have a damage rating and a Relative Dominance Meter. Basically, Relative Dominance depicts how well the match is going for a wrestler by combining a power rating and damage. This increases as moves are successfully accomplished, and drops as hits are taken. The damage rating represents a threshold of damage points over which the wrestler is seriously weakened. This is useful for indicating when to change from offensive to defensive manoeuvres.

A sequence of digitised ringside graphics showing the accomplished move is then shown on screen, with the occasional crowd shot for good measure. To add that extra touch of realism, two well-known American match commentators sit at the bottom of the screen passing judgement on the wrestlers competence.

Should things be going especially badly, the player may take advantage of a limited number of moves not listed in the rules of the sport. Hulk Hogan, who always plays fair, might gain a boost of energy by calling for the support of the crowd. The less sporting wrestlers can twice make use of a dirty trick which weakens his opponent, but brings the risk of disqualification.



Unfortunately, unusual and original concepts don't always work, and Microleague Wrestling **proves the point. The presentation is all there: a wide variety of control methods complements the easy movement selection system, an excellent front end, in-game comments and rapid disk access. However, actually playing the game isn't as much fun. The combination of digitised action shots and limited response commands is interesting to play around with at first, but it soon becomes dull. Particularly irritating is the lack of different comments and screenshots: the shot of the grinning ringside woman time and time again is particularly nauseous. With a bit more variety this interesting concept could have been a compelling game; as it is, it's not interesting enough to deserve praise.**



Strange as it may seem, I used to watch the Saturday afternoon wrestling diligently, because better comedy is thin on the ground. The feeling of over-the-top showmanship I got when watching the American version of the sport has been successfully recreated by Microleague Wrestling**, which, as you would expect with Microprose, plays as a simulation rather than an action game. I'll admit that I'm surprised at the reasonable success of the approach with which the programmers have turned the sport into a well-presented computer program, even allowing the essential cheating element. To enjoy it to its fullest, though, you would have to be acquainted with wrestling, the moves (which aren't explained in the manual), and the way it is presented by the media. Its playability, therefore, is very much limited to the real grapple fans.**



► It's all over for the Hulkster . . .



► Thrills and spills in the Showbiz-style action of *Microleague Wrestling*

PRESENTATION 90%
Copious control options and good screen layout. Presented in much the same way as a television wrestling programme.

GRAPHICS 71%
Well-timed but sometimes indistinct digitised graphics

SOUND 38%
Crowd noises, thuds and thumps. Pretty poor tunes.

HOOKABILITY 69%
Digitised graphics and the original approach to wrestling inspires initial interest.

LASTABILITY 46%
Long-term appeal would be limited to wrestling fans.

OVERALL 59%
Not a brilliant game, but it recreates the atmosphere of television wrestling well enough.





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screenshots from arcade machine

ZZAP! 64

READERS'

JUNE 1988

GAMES TOP 30

1 *(1)* **CALIFORNIA GAMES**
Epyx

2 *(3)* **SHOOT 'EM UP CONSTRUCTION KIT**
Outlaw

3 *(-)* **PLATOON**
Ocean

4 *(2)* **THE LAST NINJA**
System 3

5 *(4)* **BUBBLE BOBBLE**
Firebird

6 *(11)* **NEBULUS**
Hewson

7 *(6)* **BUGGY BOY**
Elite

8 *(5)* **INTERNATIONAL KARATE**
System 3

9 *(8)* **KIKSTART II**
Mastertronic

10 *(7)* **WIZBALL**
Ocean

11 *(10)* **ARCADE CLASSICS**
Firebird

12 *(12)* **WORLD GAMES**
Epyx

13 *(13)* **OUT RUN**
US Gold

14 *(9)* **WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD**
US Gold/Access

15 *(17)* **HUNTER'S MOON**
Thalamus

16 *(16)* **GAUNTLET**
US Gold

17 *(14)* **DEFENDER OF THE CROWN**
Mirrorsoft

18 *(15)* **LEADERBOARD**
US Gold

19 *(26)* **PROJECT STEALTH FIGHTER**
Microprose

20 *(25)* **SKATE OR DIE**
Electronic Arts

21 *(-)* **BATTLE VALLEY**
Firebird

22 *(-)* **PREDATOR**
Activision

23 *(20)* **GUNSHIP**
Microprose

24 *(-)* **I BALL II**
Firebird

25 *(27)* **4TH & INCHES**
US Gold

26 *(21)* **720°**
US Gold

27 *(23)* **BARBARIAN**
Palace

28 *(-)* **ZYBEX**
Zeppelin

28 *(-)* **GHOSTBUSTERS**
Ricochet

30 *(-)* **STRIKEFLEET**
Electronic Arts

CHARTS

MUSIC TOP 10

1 *(1)* **DELTA**
Thalamus
Main Theme – Rob Hubbard

2 *(2)* **ARCADE CLASSICS**
Firebird
Main Theme – Rob Hubbard

3 *(4)* **BMX KIDZ**
Firebird
Title Tune – Rob Hubbard

4 *(3)* **SANXION**
Thalamus
Loading Music – Rob Hubbard

5 *(5)* **SKATE OR DIE**
Electronic Arts
Title Tune – Rob Hubbard

6 *(6)* **INTERNATIONAL KARATE +**
System 3
Title Tune – Rob Hubbard

7 *(-)* **DRILLER**
Incentive
Main Theme – Matt Gray

8 *(-)* **TETRIS**
Mirrorsoft
Main Theme – Hagar

9 *(9)* **WIZBALL**
Ocean
Main Theme – Martin Galway

10 *(10)* **I BALL**
Firebird
Main Theme – Rob Hubbard

COIN-OP TOP 10

1 *(-)* **BUBBLE BOBBLE**
Taito

2 *(-)* **BLASTEROIDS**
Atari

3 *(-)* **R-TYPE**
Irem

4 *(-)* **SUPER HANG-ON**
Sega

5 *(-)* **AFTERBURNER**
Sega

6 *(-)* **GALAGA 88**
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7 *(-)* **OPERATION WOLF**
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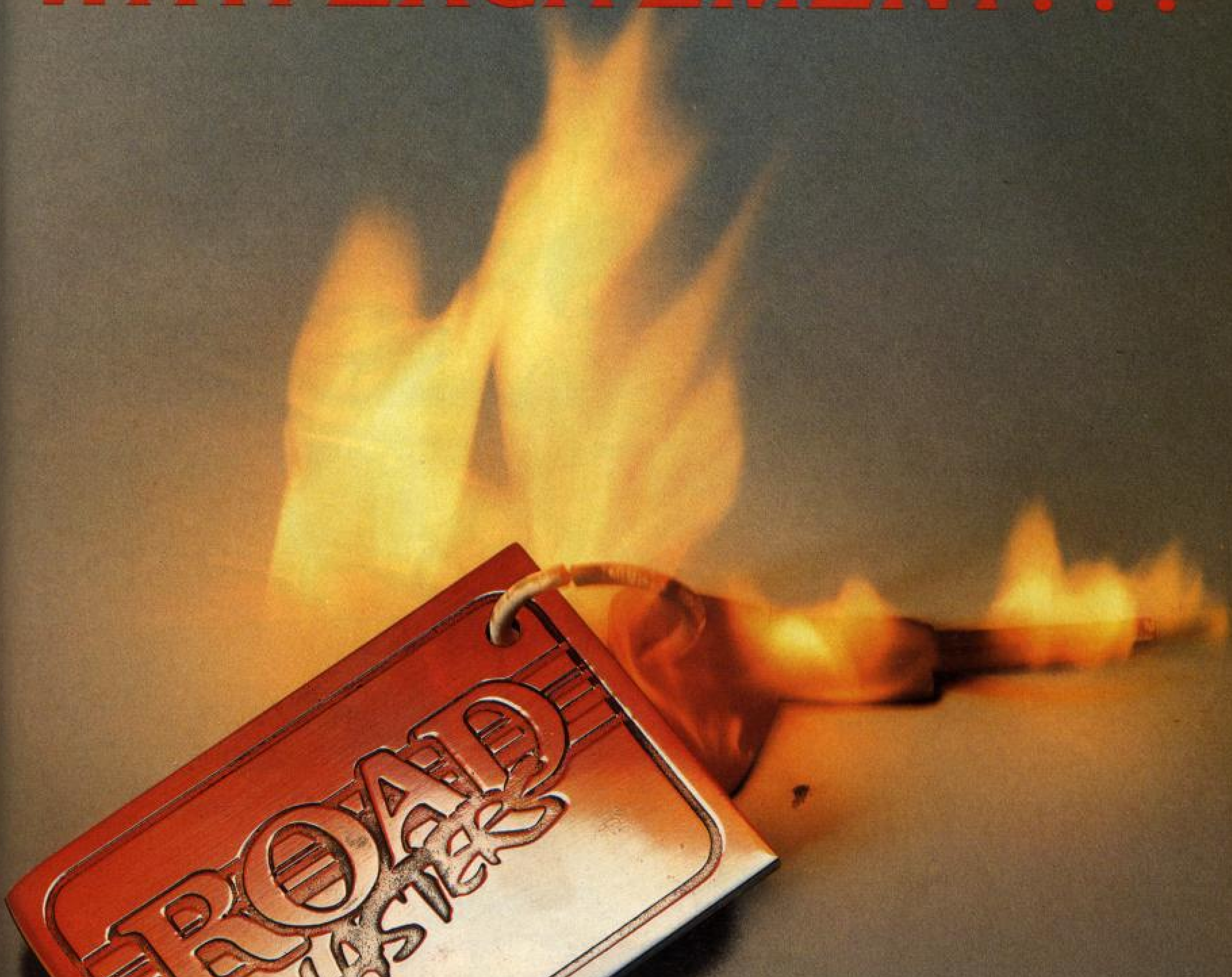
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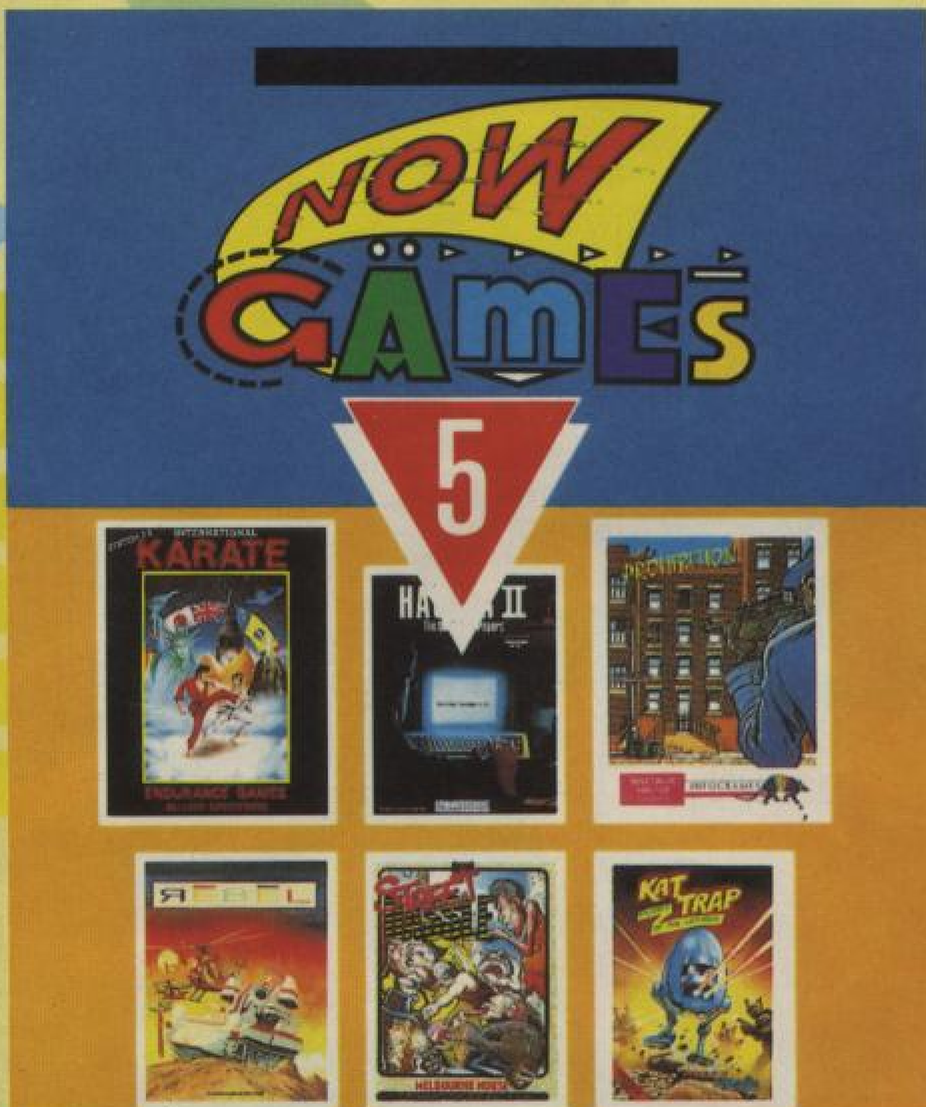

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ZZAP!'s monthly round-up of budget software

WHEELIES

Micro Selection Plus, £2.99 cass, joystick only

Tarkus and Eugene, a friendly pair of Wheelies are on the move through a vertically scrolling landscape of strange structures and even stranger creatures. Their vocation is to rescue any fellow wheelies they come across from an eternal flat spin.

One or two players control the rolly fellows, avoiding or blasting away at any nasty they come across in the seven selectable landscapes. A gradually emptying bottle represents each Wheelie's energy, which gradually diminishes as play progresses. Contact with a hostile or its associated projectiles stuns our heroes as well as drawing large energy from each player's store. Unless the player picks up mushrooms (which restore small quantities of energy) and red flasks (which top the bottles up), the liquid life-force will drain away completely. Should Eugene and Tarkus run into a monster when their bottles are empty, they become ex-Wheelies and the game ends.



▲ More than a suggestion of *SEUCK* stains this cute shoot 'em up



The promise of simultaneous two-player shoot and collect 'em up action led me to believe that Wheelies would be something worth enduring a bad title screen for. Well, although the graphics and sound are nothing special, some of the level layouts do seem to have had some thought put into them, and the air of mild silliness made the first few games enjoyable. The level select is a bad idea: after several games I had been able to play to the end of every level separately, and the desire to complete the whole game diminished entirely.



This has bright and colourful graphics with some very appealing characters, a one or two-player option and graded entry levels. The only problem is that it's all too familiar: the way the graphics are drawn and behave, coupled with the derivative sound effects is far too reminiscent of a SEUCK creation – which isn't surprising, since it's been verified that huge chunks of code are exactly the same. The only difference is an improvised title screen and some presentation details; the rest consists of uncredited Sensible Software material . . . For three quid it'd be worth saving to invest in the original.

PRESENTATION 61%
Simultaneous two-player option, and level selection make up for poor title screen.

GRAPHICS 47%
Jolly, but inelegant sprites traverse reasonable backdrops.

SOUND 49%
Quaint title tune and jingles. Passable spot FX.

HOOKABILITY 62%
Simple gameplay and level select make it easy to get into.

LASTABILITY 30%
Moderately difficult, but after a few games the player has seen all the game's sights, so there's little impetus to return to it.

OVERALL 39%
A mediocre game which gives up its secrets rather too easily, and so loses out on long-term challenge.

SUBTERRANEA

Rack-It, £2.99, joystick only

Mining is a dangerous business at the best of times, but when you're looking for mineral deposits in space and your mining droids go haywire, you're in real trouble! Such a disaster has struck in *Subterranea* and, as usual, it's up to the player to save the day, not to mention the miners.

This requires the player to fly his blaster-toting spacecraft through sixteen horizontally scrolling caverns, each one thick with belligerent robots who have decided to work to rule for a change, as well as clearing the path of obstacles which would otherwise spell certain doom should the spacecraft crash into them.



▲ Gorgeous graphics and tough gameplay characterise Rack-It's latest release



Although Rack-It are continuing to set high standards in budget software, Subterranea doesn't quite hit the mark. This is only due to the poor presentation: the scenario doesn't match the gameplay, there are no firm end of level sequences and there's no two-player option. The control method is also too sensitive, death being a result of bad luck rather than poor judgement. Otherwise it's impressive: the graphics are gorgeous and the sound is accomplished; the sixteen levels provide plenty of challenge because the landscapes grow more hazardous as you progress. It's derivative of Zynaps and poorly fronted, but Subterranea is still well worth a look.



Original it isn't, but at least Subterranea manages to recreate the addictive aura of some of the better horizontal scrollers. It's a pity it lacks the boost that extra weaponry bestows, but there's enough gameplay to ensure that this feature's absence isn't sorely missed. Graphically, Subterranea is very nice indeed, and sports some particularly pretty cavern backdrops. The sprites are just as well-drawn, with detail even extending to recoiling guns on the spacecraft. The only fault present is the slightly suspect collision detection, but this isn't detrimental to the extent that it spoils play. The rough edges wouldn't stop me from recommending this.

Indestructible barriers are deactivated by shooting a control box in the cavern wall. Other blasted boxes bestow enough energy upon the player's craft to generate a short-lived defensive shield.

PRESENTATION 64%
Superb title screen, but not much in the way of game options.

GRAPHICS 83%
Smooth and nicely detailed sprites accompany pretty backgrounds.

SOUND 71%
Funky title track and competent in-game effects.

HOOKABILITY 77%
Simple blasting action proves immediately appealing.

LASTABILITY 76%
Sixteen pulse-pounding caverns provide plenty of lasting action.

OVERALL 74%
A fine example of the genre at an easily affordable price.

ZZAP! BUDGET

TRAIN ROBBERS
Firebird, £1.99 cass, joystick only

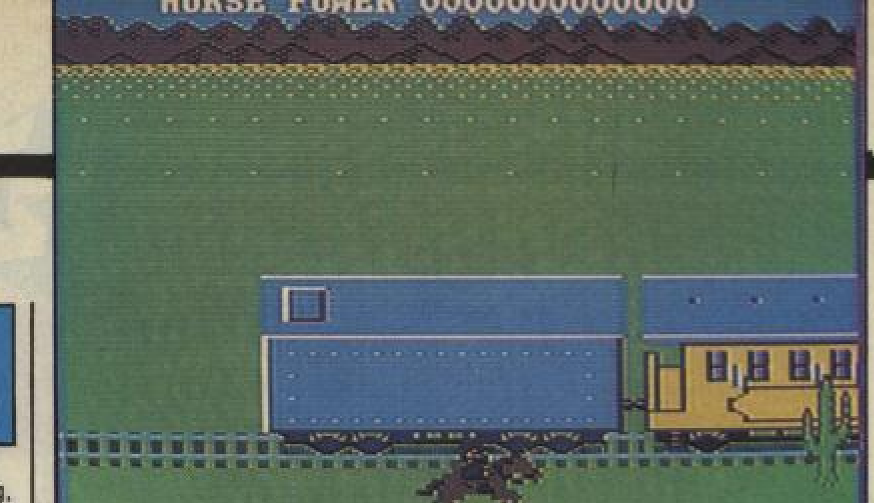
Cactus Pete's mission in life is to rob trains, an activity which has gained him a $4,000 price tag. The player's task is to guide the Wild West desperado as he attempts to steal caches of loot from unsuspecting locomotives.

The game has three basic stages: climbing onto the train, pillaging its contents and escaping. The first part involves guiding Pete's trusty steed alongside the train dodging cacti and climbing up the ladder on the first carriage. Should the player take too long, his horse becomes exhausted and one of three lives is lost.

Once on board, gaps between cars are jumped and tunnels avoided until the Bullion Wagon is reached. Inside the wagon two keys are collected to open a safe – however, the room is guarded by vicious dogs, contact with which loses a life. With the booty successfully appropriated, Pete makes his way back to the front of the carriage avoiding more obstacles where his faithful horse awaits to take him to the next train..



Ignore the plain, dull and blocky graphics – it's infuriatingly compulsive to play. The action is just tricky enough to allow gradual progress and just frustrating enough to be addictive. This is partly because of the aural and visual humour: the sound immediately creates a jolly atmosphere because it's so simple. Pete's expression never changes: whether he's splattered against a tunnel wall, bitten by a dog or wrapped around a mail catcher, he remains stoical throughout. The gameplay has subtle random elements which make each game different; for example, the distances between tunnels in the first part are always varied. Whatever happens, you'll keep coming back for more . . . Train Robbers **is very silly and unbelievably infuriating, but above all, it's fun.**



Train Robbers: it may look blocky but it's still brilliant



Through its many touches of slightly sick humour, Train Robbers **recreates a superb feeling of watching a slapstick cartoon, starring a spectularly inept outlaw. Running into the roof of a tunnel, mistiming a leap, lying down in the darkness of the tunnel, and being caught by one of the dogs all provoke a smile from the player. In fact, the way the graphics have been used compensates for their rough appearance. Play is as unsophisticated as the laughs, so the game is tremendously easy to get into, and the gentle frustration element means that it's just as easy to become hooked. For two quid you'd be crazy to miss out on this novel little game.**

PRESENTATION 76%
One/two-player option, high-score table and lucid screen display.

GRAPHICS 40%
Basic animation, bland use of colour and little variety.

SOUND 53%
Humorous if very simple spot effects coupled with an ancient Rob Hubbard title tune.

HOOKABILITY 95%
Very simple gameplay elements belie the infuriating addiction.

LASTABILITY 81%
Plenty of trains to rob combined with a brilliant balance of frustration and fun make for a compulsive game that can be played any time.

OVERALL 90%
Simple, addictive and very enjoyable.



Those nasties will take your oxes if your footsies aren't quick enough

OH NO!

Firebird, £1.99 cass, joystick only

It's the year 1,000,000 AD and the Universe is a very weird place. Brain engineering has reached new heights and the player of *Oh No!* is a sad victim of the latest technique in brain specialisation.

Aboard the inertially-controlled trusty steed, Badjak, the player's sole purpose is to raise and breed Oxes – fascinating, glowing orbs of intense religious significance – on eight multidirectionally scrolling worlds. The screen display shows one quarter of the patrol area, but the whole world is revealed on radar.

Armed with super lasers and a toenail boomerang gun the player protects the prized herd from alien rustlers; occasionally an Oxe parent – a metaphysical energy field – appears on the landscape: destroying this brief physical apparition provides enough energy for a brand new baby Oxe to be born. When nine aliens waves are cleared, the next world is accessed.

Instant death is the penalty for losing all five Oxes: your specially engineered brain explodes with excitement.



Once again, Sensible Software prove that, as far as blasting goes, they are master craftsmen. Oh No **cannot boast the sophistication of their masterpiece,** Wizball, **but its simplicity is its strength. The pace of the action is extremely fast because the player's ship is in constant motion. Play therefore reaches such heights of freneticism as only previously witnessed in Minter games, and the player is rushed headlong into fevered addiction. The first few levels are easily beaten, but just as you're getting confident, the game abandons its deceit and throws crowds of marauding aliens at you. If you want something to pick up and play to fill an empty moment, there's not much going that beats this.**



Couple the same sense of humour that appeared in the ageing Galaxibirds **with frenetic, psychedelic shoot 'em up action, and you have** Oh No!. **The unusual inertial control method only enhances the action as your steed hurtles about the screen. Combined with the bright, colourful graphics and decent sound, it produces a very enjoyable game. The impressive presentation includes numerous humorous touches (spelling mistakes, graphic jokes) and a neat highscore table, although a two-player option would improve it. It's not the greatest budget blast around, but if you're looking to unleash some energy, this fits the bill.**

PRESENTATION 76%
An amusing scenario supported by colourful screen display and highscore table; no two-player option.

GRAPHICS 71%
Colourful and polished sprites set on a range of similar backdrops.

SOUND 80%
Standard blasting noises supported by appealing tunes.

HOOKABILITY 83%
Fast, colourful action from the start.

LASTABILITY 72%
Plenty of worlds to protect but the repetitive nature of the gameplay could prove unattractive.

OVERALL 80%
An enjoyable, if ultimately limited, blast.

DRACONUS

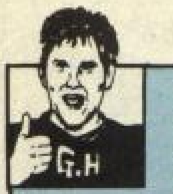
Zeppelin, £2.99, joystick only



On a distant alien planet the Tyrant Beast reigns supreme: controlling a creature who can transform from the land-based Frognum to the aquatic Draconewt, the player is on a mission to defeat him.

The Beast inhabits a flick-screen labyrinthine complex guarded by such creatures as giant rats, bats and sea serpents. All enemies are destroyed by punches or limited bursts of fire, the latter replenished by flasks of flame fluid found in the labyrinth. Contact with creatures or falling great distances reduces energy, total loss of which forfeits one of five lives.

Artifacts are collected to aid progress: for example, a morph helix allows transformation from one character to the other when on a morph slab, thus allowing access to locations separated by water. Other objects include a shield (prevents death by falling), a magic staff (needed to cast spells), and a dragon's eye (removes illusory obstacles): their significance is detailed when they are collected.



The amount of detail applied is very impressive. A beautiful use of colour and shading in the backdrops complements some superb sprite animation: the bats in particular are astounding! The sound is equally polished, the effect of fire bursting from Frognum's mouth being typical of the overall standard. The gameplay is basically a standard arcade adventure, but it's considerably enhanced by the number of useful artifacts to collect, the Record slabs and the ability to transform from one character to another. It's by no means easy reaching the Tyrant Beast, but there's so much enjoyment to be had before then that addiction is guaranteed. Buy it today!





Once again, Zeppelin put paid to the budget 'tradition' of quality matching price. Nothing is lacking, and as an arcade adventure its aims are admirably achieved. Superbly crafted graphics create a fantastic Gothic atmosphere, and the sound effects are perfect. Such smart touches as transmorphing into a draconewt, and the useful record slabs are gratefully received and are conducive to immediately captivating play. The overall hugeness of the game means you'll be playing for ages, and it's certainly worth doing to see the fantastic Tyrant Beast on the final screen. Three pounds are seldom better spent, so do yourself a favour and buy this with all speed.

PRESENTATION 88%
The excellent screen display, instructions and impressive features such as Record slabs are only marred by the occasionally awkward control method.

GRAPHICS 94%
Beautifully animated sprites complement the subtle use of shading and colour throughout.

SOUND 80%
Appropriate sound effects and accomplished title track.

HOOKABILITY 90%
The ability to play two characters and freedom of movement within the landscape encourages progress.

LASTABILITY 92%
A multitude of locations to explore, weapons to collect and creatures to combat guarantees further play.

OVERALL 92%
Another excellent release from Zeppelin.

SCOUT

Mastertronic, £1.99 cass, joystick with keys

Materialising out of hyperspace, your intergalactic spacecraft is shattered into eight pieces and liberally scattered over as many planets. Protected only by a humble scout vehicle, it's the player's task to penetrate each world and reassemble his ship.

Each area scrolls continuously from right to left and involves a series of raised platforms above a sea of pure sulphuric acid. The current score, highscore, level and number of lives remaining (initially eight) are all displayed on-screen. Contact with aliens, the sides of platforms or acid results in the loss of a life.

The scout is equipped with a single forward-firing laser and moves in short hops; however, extra features such as wings are found scattered around the landscapes. However, these customisations are only short-lived.



The backdrops and main sprites combine bright colours with unusual design to create a convincingly alien feel; the enemy ships are pretty unimaginative, though, and range from tiny helicopters to meaningless blobs. The main fault is that it takes far too long, too much luck and too many annoying deaths to complete a couple of levels. Progress is severely restricted by a mixture of hyperactive alien movement and the constant scrolling; were the game any easier this would create tension rather than annoyance. Criticisms apart, the game holds a perverse attraction because of its difficulty, and even though there are eight increasingly similar levels, the advancing toughness should keep you going for a while. If you're long on patience or keen on masochism, take a look at Scout.



► Even the fuel-injected wheelchair can't handle the first level of *Scout*



This game is hard to begin with, but it's made even more difficult by suspect collision detection, which has the player dying after running into explosions or landing somewhere other than the centre of platforms. Even when the player has a solid stream of fire going, aliens bounce through it unscathed and it's back to the start of the level. AAAGH! This makes a difficult game into one that is a bit too hostile, and not even a turbocharged wheelchair can make me like a game that doesn't play fair.

PRESENTATION 39%
Little in the way of options, inadequate instructions and standard highscore table.

GRAPHICS 60%
Colourful and reasonably drawn, but too little diversity in both style and content.

SOUND 62%
An appealingly raunchy in-game tune, but no sound effects.

HOOKABILITY 52%
Very difficult to make any real progress.

LASTABILITY 39%
The high frustration element and inter-level similarity overwhelm the desire to progress.

OVERALL 48%
An interesting concept marred by excessive difficulty and lack of variety.

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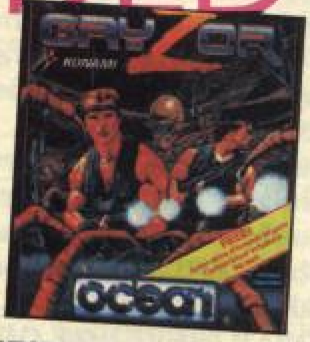
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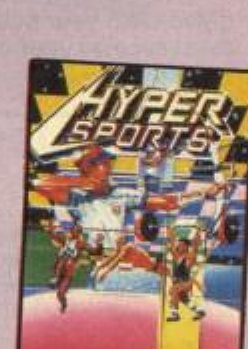
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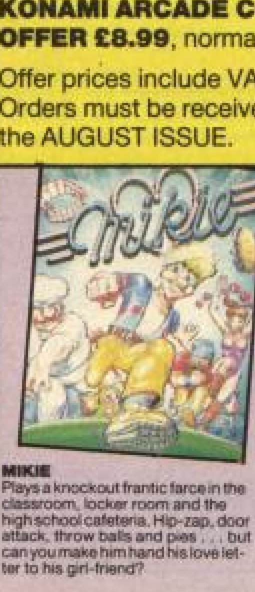
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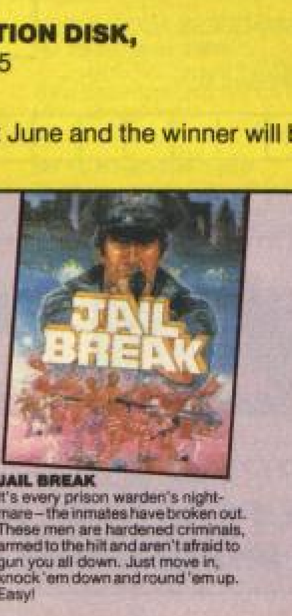
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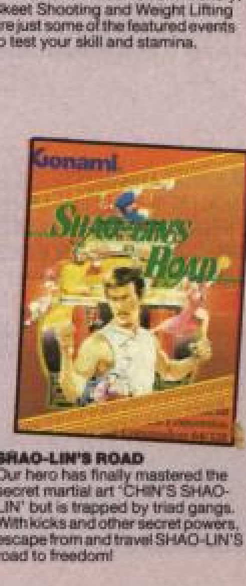
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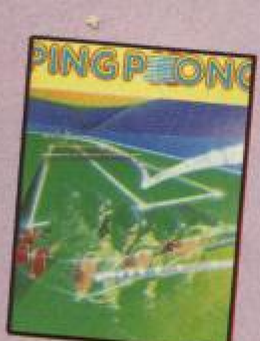


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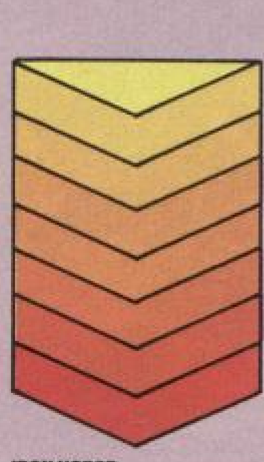
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PING PONG
You can almost feel the tension of the big match breaking through the screen . . . the expectant crowd is almost on top of you! You return the service with a Top-spin Backhand, then a Forehand Back-spin, the ball bounces high from your opponent's looping, defensive lob . . . SMASH! . . . a great shot opens the score . . .



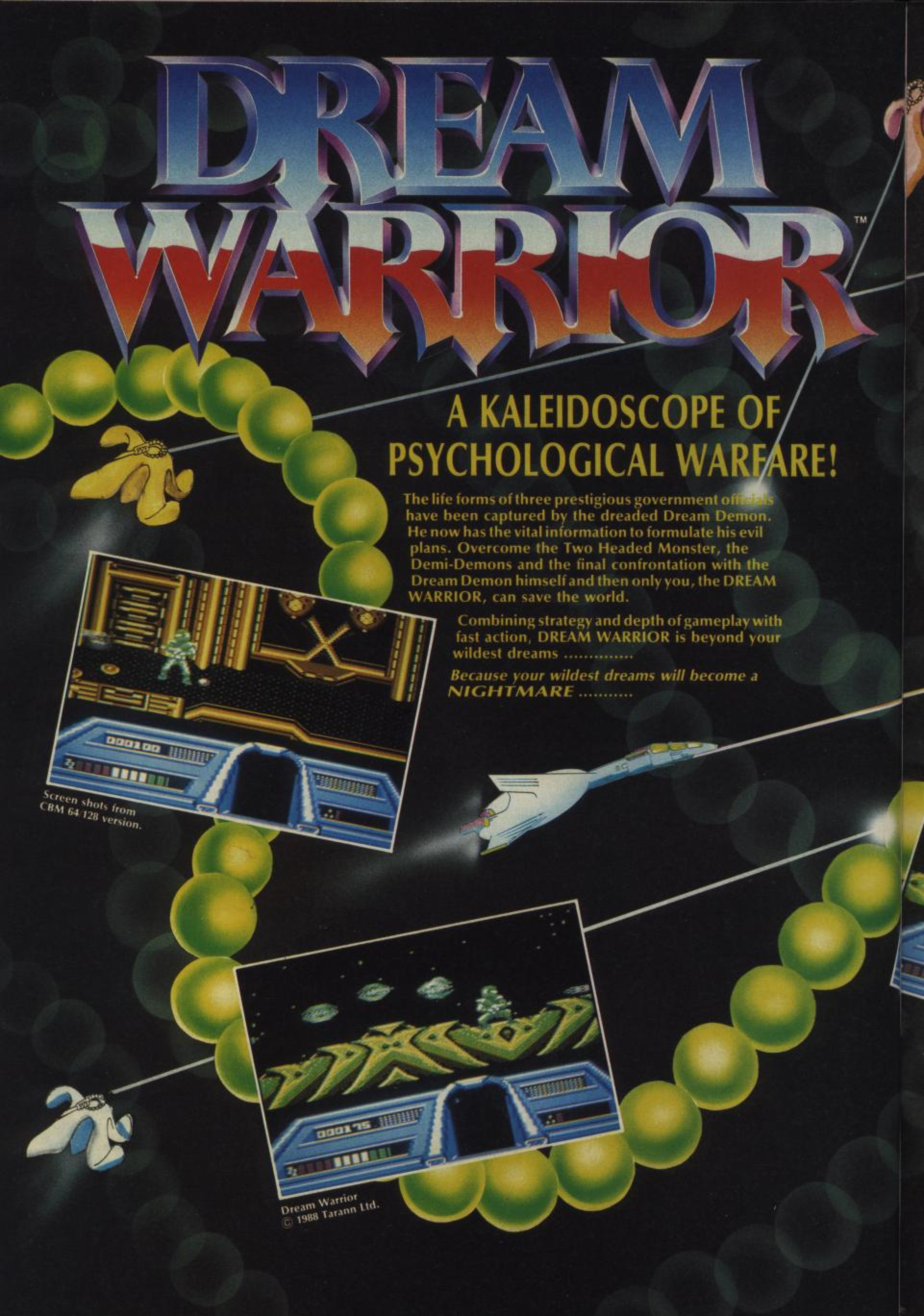
IRON HORSE
Fresh from the arcades, fresh on the Commodore, a wild west train dash with weapons exchanged level by level as you battle for control of the Iron Horse. Coin-op excitement at its best.



YIE AR KUNG-FU
Become a grand-master but to achieve this you must defeat a variety of deadly opponents, armed with different skills and weapons and must be overcome with a combination of 6 different attack moves.

SUPER DRAW VOUCHER

Commodore


DREAM WARRIOR™
A KALEIDOSCOPE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE!
The life forms of three prestigious government officials have been captured by the dreaded Dream Demon. He now has the vital information to formulate his evil plans. Overcome the Two Headed Monster, the Demi-Demons and the final confrontation with the Dream Demon himself and then only you, the DREAM WARRIOR, can save the world.
Combining strategy and depth of gameplay with fast action, DREAM WARRIOR is beyond your wildest dreams ....
Because your wildest dreams will become a NIGHTMARE ....
Screen shots from CBM 64/128 version.
Dream Warrior © 1988 Tarann Ltd.



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Spectrum £8.99
Amstrad £9.99 £14.99
IBM PC £19.99
U.S. Gold Ltd., Units 2/3 Holford Way,
Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX. Tel: (021) 356 3388
U.S. GOLD
LIFT

ZZAP! WINNERS



Hello again. I'm afraid there isn't the usual amount of results this month because I didn't have enough time to type in all 1001 winning names and addresses to our mega 'Happy Birthday ZZAP!' comp. Nevertheless, we still have some goodies for you to look at . . .

LANDROVER COMP

Elite were offering a day out at Landrover plus a copy of *Ikari Warriors* and a T-shirt to three readers who came up with the best idea and design for a multi-terrain vehicle. They were:

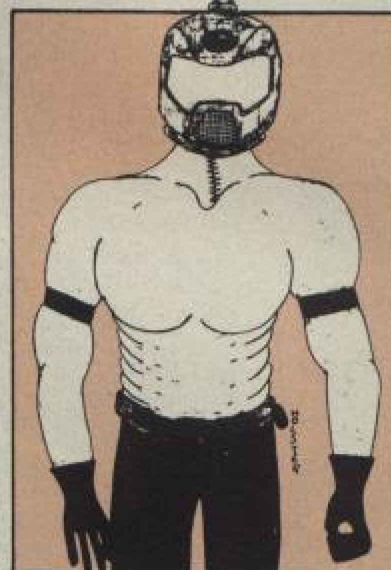
David Stewart, Corsham, SN13 9JD; Mark Hoskyns, Bletchley, MK3 7QD; R I Farley, Broughton, NN14 1PD.

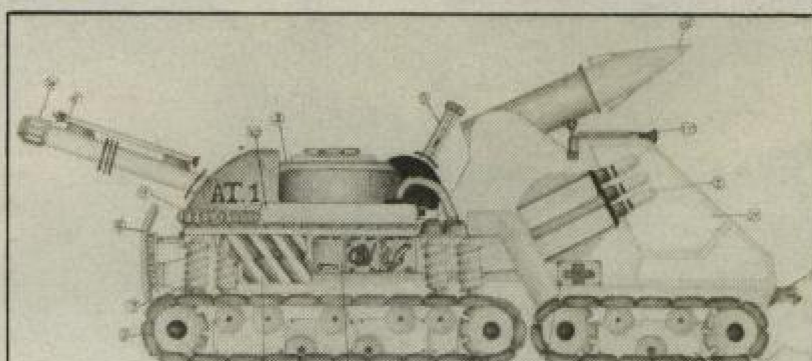
The 30 runners-up are each to receive a copy of the game and a T-shirt:

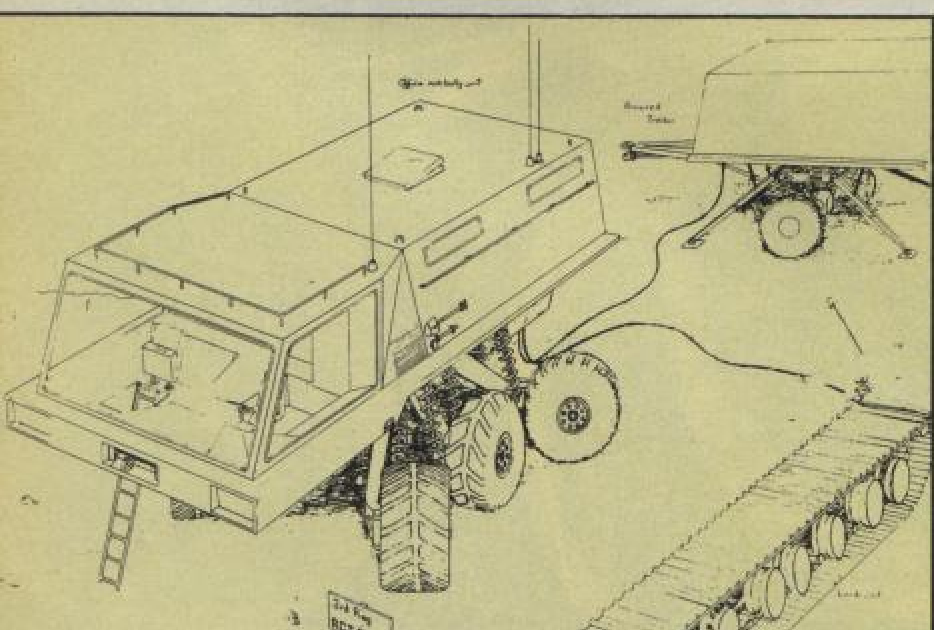
Gianfranco Manini, Giffnock, G46 6EJ; Phillip Peel, Nr Northwich, Cheshire; Andrew Potts, Kingswinford, DY6 8NY; Dean Chester, Stevenage, SG2 7DL; Lee Crawley, Barnsley, S71 2JW; Paul Bailey, Formby, L37 6EY; Jason Tipple, Milton Keynes, MK5 8AQ; David Exton, Stafford, ST16 3SG; Stephen Chester, Seaford, BN25 4BZ; Duncan James Caddick, West Bromwich, B71 3QT; Paul Nightingale, Milton Keynes, MK5 6DB; Daniel Jones, Worthing, BN12 4QP; T Townend, Wakefield, WJ1 3JX; Michael Palmer, Deepcar, S30 5PQ; Timothy Harrison, Norwich, NR8 6PP; Shane Lazenby, Richmond, DL10 6EF; Jason Tipple, Milton Keynes, MK5 8AQ; Paul Hayman, Dinas Powys, CF6 4BY; Andrew Goros, Kings Lynn, PE31 8ST; Crispian Cook, Guildford, GU4 7JF; Alex Seymour, Canvey Island, SS8 0DQ; Jonathon Wilkes, Hortford Heath, SG13 7RJ; Justin Zajac, North Canterbury, New Zealand; Anthony Quarmby, Lincoln, LN7 1RZ; Trevor Fisher, Prestwich, M25 7HG; Steve Tatterton, Woking, GU21 1AR; Mr Mohammed Khalid, Wolverhampton, WV3 0AX; Paul Andrews and Neil Cloke, Ashford, TN23 2BN; Dave Robinson, Northwich, CW9 7DL; Suroj Shrestha, Longsight, M12 4GN.

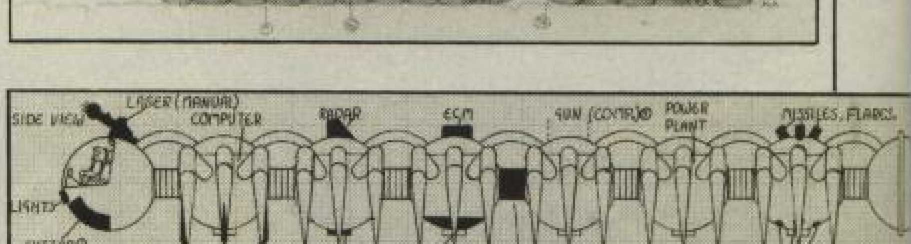
COMPETITION SIMULATOR

Just a weeny comp, this one, with Code Masters giving away their entire range of Commodore games to the winner. He's **David Fairweather** of Blackburn, BB2 4LA. Lucky David – you've got some pretty enjoyable playing ahead! Two runners-up are to receive packs of five Code Masters games, and they are **Ian Tows** of Blyth, NE24 4EE and **Matti Kennedy** from Cornwall, PL18 9HW.









OK! That's it for now. I hope you like the piccies – they're good, aren't they? One thing I've noticed is multiple entries to competitions. Please can we have one entry per person – this month I spotted that one greedy person (who shall remain nameless) had sent in eight entries to the Code Masters competition! He didn't win, of course.

If you have any problems regarding competitions, write to me, **Glenys Powell, ZZAP! 64, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB** and I'll endeavour to set things right.

See you next month.


FEAR
fear *n* **1** an unpleasant often strong emotion caused by anticipation or awareness of danger **2** anxiety, solicitude **3** profound reverence and awe, esp towards God **4** reason for alarm; danger
fear *vt* **1** to have a reverential awe of < ~ *God* > **2** to be afraid of; consider or expect with alarm ~ *vi* to be afraid or apprehensive
DO YOU DARE ENTER . . .

THE WORLD OF FANTASY AND HORROR . . .

FEAR is a stunning new magazine. A publication that will chart a wondrous course through the thrill of Fantasy, the dark dread of Horror and the mindblast of Science Fiction. These three related genres make up today's biggest single interest area in fiction, films and video, and now the essential reading companion to this absorbing world is here at last. A magazine created to reflect the atmosphere and colour, the frisson and savagery of the imagination of the world's great writers and directors.

In *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind*, when the gathered scientists all stare skywards as the vast mothership regally descends, the emotion writ large upon all their faces is one of **fear**. And yet, clearly, they are not terrorised, horrified or even frightened – they are in awe; and later, their state of awe turns to one of reverence at the astonishing event they are witnessing.

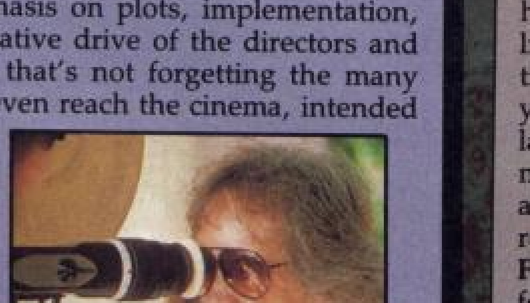
Yes, **fear** does mean the state of mind traditionally associated with the word, but it also implies awe, reverence and – most importantly – wonder.

FEAR is a publication that will keep you informed, is bound to make you think – and will definitely chill your bones. It will be Britain's glossiest and most stylish Fantasy and Horror magazine ever – so let it gnaw its way into your life . . .

FILMS – VIDEO

Fantasy films for the cinema have been big box-office since *Star Wars*, and with the advent of the video player, hire cassettes and masterpieces such as *Halloween* and *Hellraiser*, it has grown into a multi-billion dollar affair.

With special correspondents already in position in the United States, **FEAR** will bring you the very latest production news, interviews, profiles and – most importantly – reviews on films well before they are available in the UK, with the emphasis on plots, implementation, special effects and the creative drive of the directors and actors behind them. And that's not forgetting the many productions which never even reach the cinema, intended as they are for direct video distribution – another crucial area in which you will be relying on **FEAR** to let you know what's happening, when, how it was done and by whom.

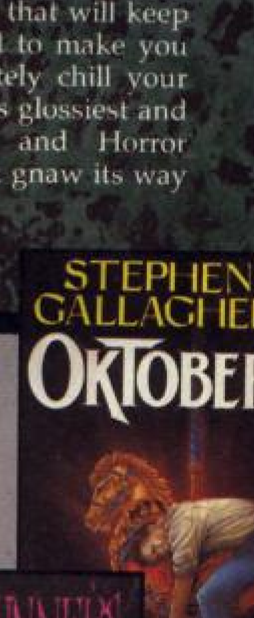




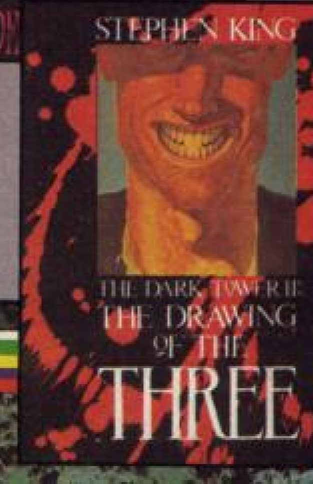


BOOK REVIEWS

Films may be the most obviously visual outward expression of the Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror genres, but the heart and core is its literature. Hundreds of titles are released every year, forming one of the largest slices of the book market – yet there has been almost nowhere for you to read reviews – until now. **FEAR** will be in the forefront of bringing you authoritative reviews of the very latest fiction from both sides of the Atlantic, often using well-known novelists as critics. And **FEAR** won't be ignoring the news element, letting you know what to expect and look out for in the world of books.





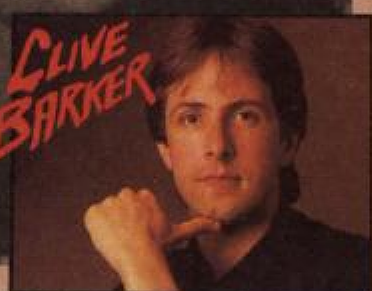




FICTION







One unique aspect to **FEAR** will be immediately apparent: fiction. For the first time in years, **FEAR** will represent a vital outlet for short stories.
We are commissioning internationally famous, best-selling novelists from the Fantasy, Horror and Science Fiction fields to write short stories for **FEAR**. Most of these authors love writing short stories, yet have very few publishing outlets for them and there is a huge readership begging for them. You can certainly expect to read stories from the pens of writers such as Shaun Hutson, Clive Barker and Ramsey Campbell in the first few issues. Not only the famous are catered for though, **FEAR** will also be looking for contributions from outstanding young writers who have not yet had the opportunity to publish – a chance, perhaps, for you to shine as well!

CLASSIFIEDS

You will want to contact thousands of other like-minded readers with low-cost small ads, whether you want to buy, swap or sell something, find pen-pals, discover access to private collections of knowledge for research purposes, advise others of club and society activities or let them know about your fanzines. **FEAR**'s reader classified section will probably be the best way of doing it, and you can place a small ad for as little as £3.00 for 35 words (and a better deal exists for **FEAR** subscribers). The Personal classifieds are not open to trade advertising, but small ad semi-display rates are available on request.

FEAR is a bi-monthly magazine from Newsfield, publishers of Britain's top computer titles CRASH, ZZAP!64 and THE GAMES MACHINE, and edited by John Gilbert who has been reviews editor for SINCLAIR USER, regular contributor to THE GAMES MACHINE and now brings his considerable knowledge and love of Fantasy and Horror to what will prove to be the most exciting and vital new publication this year.

FEAR is a not-to-be-missed experience in terror and awe, wonder and excitement, and it starts on June 16, priced £2.50 – with extra special subscriber discounts – see the details!

In your first issue:

THEY LIVE!
Film maker John Carpenter on his latest offering PRINCE OF DARKNESS

SKIPP and SPECTOR
Brilliant new writing duo from the States, tell all on their new book THE SCREAM, and their collaboration with CLIVE BARKER on the forthcoming film THE BRIDGE

OKTOBER
Best-selling author STEPHEN GALLAGHER quizzed on his new hardback offering and VALLEY OF LIGHTS – out in paperback

NEIL JORDAN
The creator of COMPANY OF WOLVES on his latest offering

CUT!
We find out how the British Board of Film Censors decides on what we are allowed to see – and your chance to air your views!

FEAR FICTION!
When little girls want revenge, teachers should beware
THE EYE OF CHILDHOOD
Ramsey Campbell paints in blood . . .

Time-telling can go wrong for
THE DANDELYON WOMAN
SF terror from Nicholas Royle

And a mystery story (he won't tell) from
Shaun Hutson

AND THEN THERE'S:
PAGES OF REVIEWS covering the latest film and video releases and book launches
NEWS AND PREVIEWS from both Britain and the States on novels and films we can expect to see later this year
HOW TO MAKE A MOVIE
COMPETITIONS galore, with some very strange and exciting prizes
FAN CLUB profiles, news and events guide and introducing:
THE FEAR FACTOR – start of a regular series where famous people tell of their terrors





Please note: the contents shown on the Issue 1 cover above are only intended to convey an impression and may not be the same as the contents actually published in the first issue.

SEND NOW FOR YOUR FIRST COPY!

I HAVE KNOWN NO FEAR AND WOULD LIKE TO TASTE SOME!

Please send me a copy of Issue 1 of **FEAR**, Britain's most exciting new Fantasy magazine, price £2.50 (post+packing included.)

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DO YOU DARE ENTER . . .

FEAR

On sale from June 16

WHAT'S New

TOP TEN BOGIES

Two of Top Ten's recent budget compilations are currently residing in these offices: retailing at £2.99, they both comprise four games. *Value Pack 2* includes a quartet of programs in a state of chronic retirement: *Black Hawk*, *Slurpy*, *Herbert's Dummy Run* and *Mad Doctor*, all of which deserve less attention than derision. *Value Pack 5* is little better, and includes *Zenos* (a dull horizontal scroller), *Druid's Moon* (a basic adventure game with a very limited parser), *Jungle Raid* (a *SEUCK* creation worth five minutes' play) and *Cyber 1* (a hopeless multi-level shoot 'em up): it's safe to say that you won't enjoy these much either. If you think otherwise, both are now available.

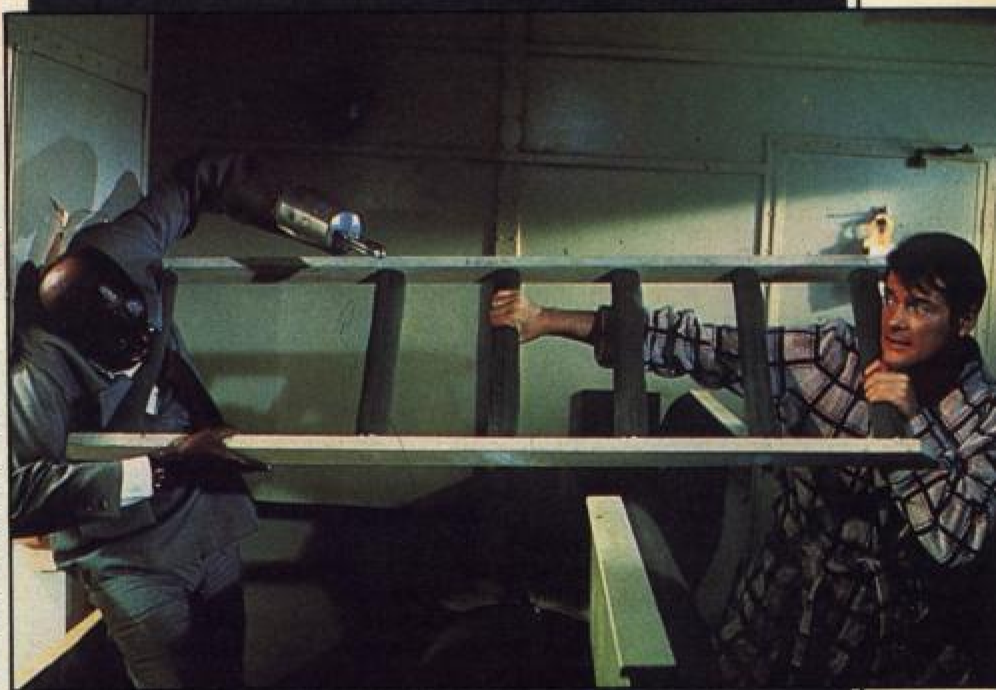
THE POWER BEHIND THE CLASSICS

The Power House have recently indulged in a spate of re-releases, numbering a few greats amongst them, even if a couple are over three years old. In order of age, they are as follows: *Grog's Revenge* (75%, Issue 2); *Dambusters* (81%, Issue 3); *Desert Fox* (87%, Issue 10); *Fight Night* (93%, Issue 10); and *Trailblazer* (93%, Issue 20). All are currently available at £1.99 each.

'ERE WE GO, 'ERE WE GO . . .

Wheeling and dealing is back in fashion: after eight months' planning and programming, Kevin Toms has produced *Football Manager II*. Several enhanced features make it reputedly far in advance of its predecessor: a fully animated score board, graphics that allow the ball to bounce realistically, a choice of any team in the four divisions and the ability to alter individual players' styles. Due for a June release, it will retail for £9.99

LET SLEEPING BONDS DIE?



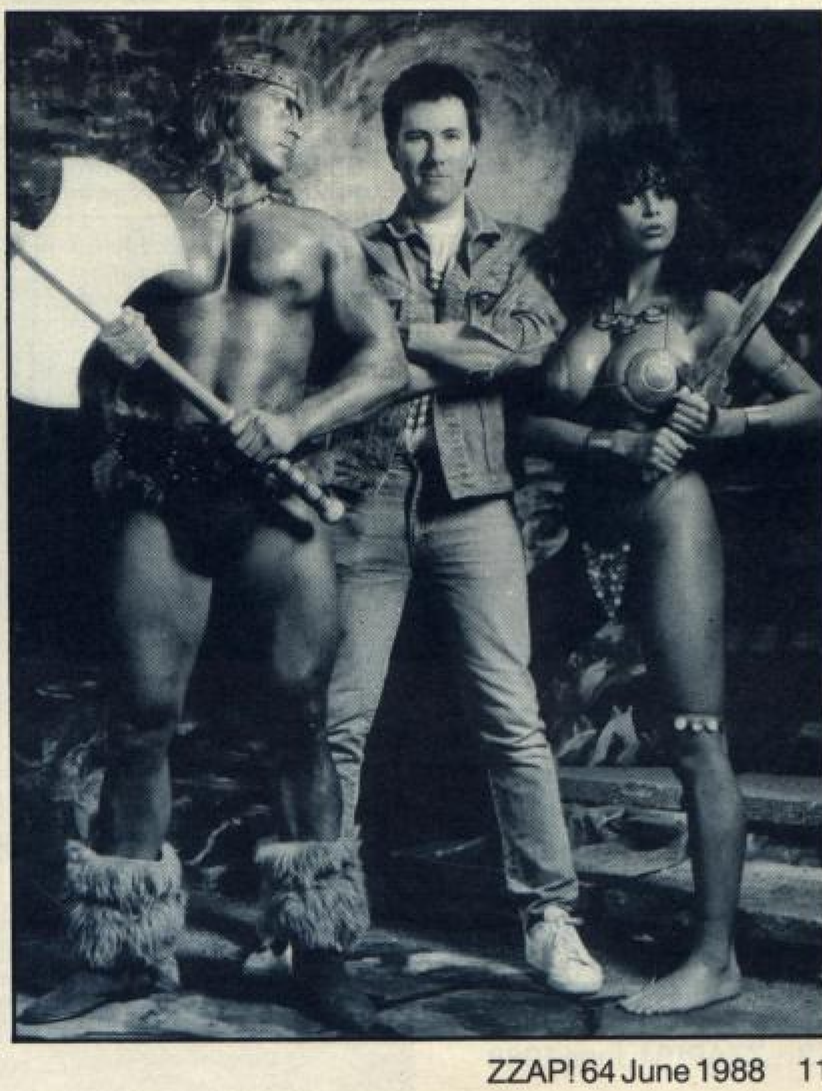
The latest word from Domark is an adaptation of *Live and Let Die*, Roger Moore's first Bond role. The game features a boat chase set along several different rivers: these are graded from easy short courses with long, slow bends to perilous long journeys with hairpin bends and tributaries. Bond commands a high-powered speedboat equipped with rocket launchers, shells and machine guns, with Kananga and his fleet in constant pursuit. Programmed by Linsoft, it will be available in the Summer.

STEALTH MISSION BLUNDER

Last month we stated that Sublogic's *Stealth Mission* costs £19.95 on disk. This is wrong: the simulation actually retails at a whopping £39.95.

BACK WITH A BANG





Mike Van Wyjk, that mighty, magnificent, muscle-bound sample of manhood, is set to hack 'n' slay his artless way back to your screens. Yes, that 'Klang . . . Thud . . . Spurt . . . Aaargh!' time has come around again: *Barbarian II: The Dungeon of Drax* is about to perform GBH to your CBM.

Controversy and poor taste abound as muscle-man and his mate, Mariana, combine ample action with the fullness of flesh in a re-match with the evil wizard Drax. This time, however, you can choose to play either the hero or the heroine – which should keep everyone happy. Reputedly bigger and better than the original, it's a multiload 'extravaganza' with a large, mappable playing area: each load features a wealth of weird and wonderful monsters determined to bring our chums to a sticky end. If it's anything like the original, the animation should be brilliant and the sound impressive: check it out around August.

COMING SOON TO A MONITOR NEAR YOU



▶ **Is it a driller? Is it a plane? No, it's a slice of action from Incentive's latest Freescape thriller**

The 'revolutionary' 3D Freescape graphics system is about to hit the Commodore again. First seen in *Driller* (a 96% ZZAP! Sizzler), it'll make its second appearance in Incentive's forthcoming *Dark Side*.

On the dark side of Evath's other moon, Tricuspid, a giant weapon – named Zephyr One – has been constructed by the Plexors to annihilate the mother planet. The main objective is to stop the destruction by destroying the Plexors – navigating the moon and its tunnel system and disabling the Energy Matrix wouldn't go amiss either.

Your futuristic space suit comes complete with a quad laser, protective Plasma Band and a jet power pack for extra mobility.

▶ ***What's this mysterious object? What will it do? A journey into the Dark Side* reveals all**



Boasting *faster* update than its predecessor, *Dark Side* will be available at £9.95 and £12.95 on cassette and disk respectively. A full review as and when . . .

You'll no doubt recognise the polished style and compact sprites of the latest Sensible Software product. Those two madcap programmers who brought you *Galaxibirds*, *Parallax*, *Wizball*, *The Shoot 'em Up Construction Kit* and *Oh No!* are now set to release *Euro Soccer*, an interpretation of the arcade footballing game, *World Cup Soccer*.

Adopting a multidirectionally scrolling format, the action is played across a football pitch approximately four screens high by two screens wide. We have it on good authority that multiple kicking modes, strategic play and all kinds of subtle manoeuvres are possible, even including overhead kicks!

The graphics, as you can see from the screenshots, look pretty smart, with smooth scrolling and some impressive sprite animation; the ball movement is very realistic, with just the right amount of inertia applied and an effective ball shadow adding to the realism.

It's safe to say that, from what we've seen, *Euro Soccer* looks as though it could be one of the best football games on the 64 market.



▶ **Inspired by *World Cup Soccer*, Sensible Software's latest masterpiece is a fun-packed footy game**





▶ **Sensisoft bites yer legs!**

The only drawback is that Sensisoft haven't yet acquired a publisher for this excellent adaptation – can games of such quality be passed up? Watch this space for further developments.





▶ **This time it's New York, but the opponents are just as tough**



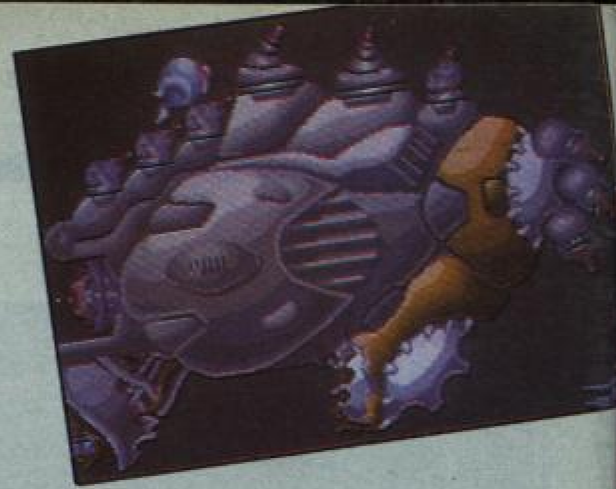
▶ ***The Last Ninja II*: the same stunning animation and even more impressive backdrops**

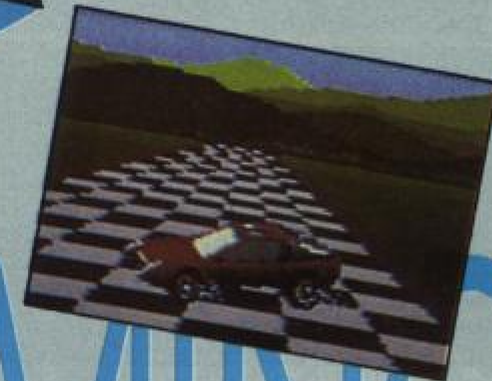


Following on from the success of *The Last Ninja* – which received universal accolades last year, including a ZZAP! Sizzler – *The Last Ninja II* is soon to hit your screens.

The sequel boasts the same high quality backdrops which created a landmark in Commodore graphics – if anything, they're slightly more colourful, detailed and atmospheric, as the accompanying photos show. The sprite animation is just as stunning and fluid, and the ninja is able to move in any of eight directions and has a wide range of martial arts manoeuvres at his disposal.

The program supports six locations and 12 different soundtracks across the New York cityscape as the Ninja sets out to do good and get to grips with opponents. Like its predecessor, the program is a multiload, but the amount of data packed in and the depth of the action more than justifies this. From provisional playing, it looks set to be one of this Summer's hottest properties: watch out for an imminent review.





FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS...



NEXT MONTH – FOR THIRTY DAYS ONLY

ANOTHER DAY AT THE ARCADES

THE BOOK

ZZAP! dons its knotted hankie for the journey of a lunchtime to sunny Blackpool, where, between donkey rides and ice creams, the happy chappies will be putting together an incredible 16-page pull-out booklet of news and playing tips for the latest and greatest items of arcade entertainment. If you're intending on playing arcade games this summer, you can't possibly afford to miss out . . .

ALSO APPEARING

THE MICROPROSE MISSION
With a Red Storm Rising, ZZAP!'s agents infiltrate the offices of Microprose for an in-depth feature on the simulation masters.

COMPETITIONS GALORE
WIN! WIN! WIN! A plethora of utterly fabulous prizes – you'll kick yourself if you miss out!

TREMENDOUS TIPS TO TERMINATE TEDIUM
ZZAP! presents an indispensable selection of POKEs, maps, hints and cheats on all the latest games. What more could a games player ask for?

THE CHALLENGE
Thrills and excitement for all the family as a hapless reviewer defends the honour of ZZAP! against the Scorelord and his highscoring minions.

AND OF COURSE..

The very latest Commodore news, reviews and previews.

AND IT'S ALL COMING YOUR WAY ON THURSDAY 9 JUNE. BUY IT OR REGRET YOUR LOSS FOR THE TERM OF YOUR NATURAL LIFE!


TAKE 'EM ALL ON...
IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO LIVE!
Screen Star
Target Renegade is hugely entertaining and ample justification for a sequel ...it develops the theme and develops the game play no end on the original...Each man is four sprites ...all beautifully drawn with great comic touches. The dog is quite wonderful. Commodore User
TARGET; RENEGADE
PCW GAME OF THE WEEK
Target Renegade has the added essence of variety, which is not to be found on other games of this kind. Fear not, this is well worth the readies. PCW Game of the week
Every move you make, every step you take, they're watching you. Fight your way through the precinct – the back alleys, the car parks, fight your way through the villainous community, the skin-heads, the Beastie Boys, the bouncers. On a hot, steamy night in New York this is just the tip of the iceberg on your chilling quest to confront "MR. BIG". A spectacular arcade style brawl with many hoodlams and hellhounds to encounter – this is target Renegade – if it moves, it hurts!
CASSETTE
SPECTRUM
£7.95 EACH
SPECTRUM
AMSTRAD
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COMMODORE
imagine
..the name of the game